

# THE NAZI NIGHTMARE— THE LAST BUT NOT THE FINAL ACT

"*The Occult and the Third Reich* marks a giant step forward in Hitler scholarship. It is the first work to demonstrate that the Nazi cosmology was an intricate synthesis of the . . . occult, nurtured by an ancient neo-Paganism. . . . The ability of neo-Paganism to militantly reaffirm itself and contest with Christianity for men's minds and bodies tells us that the Nazi nightmare is only the last, but not the final act in a larger human tragedy still being played out. . . . The authors are doubtless right in predicting that certain practitioners of the black arts will yet play a major role in determining the shape of a not-too-distant future."

—Lewis A. M. Sumberg

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Angebart

## THE OCCULT AND THE THIRD REICH

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Jean-Michel Angebert



**"He who has seen in National  
Socialism only a political  
movement, has seen nothing."  
—Adolf Hitler**

Some thirty years after this statement was made, the authors of *The Occult and the Third Reich* pronounced: "The time has come, once and for all, to call to account those who refuse to see in Nazism anything but a political system. . . . Nazism is only the most recent outcropping of a militant neo-Paganism locked in a death struggle with its arch enemy, traditional Christianity, a struggle which will go on to the end of time."

*The Occult and the Third Reich* reveals how strange and mystic cults influenced and guided Hitler, and shows how the National Socialist movement was linked to and sprung from the ancient Catharist tradition. Pushing the dualistic reasoning of Catharism to monstrous consequences, Anton Drexler, Dietrich Eckart, Rudolf Hess, and Adolf Hitler—all members and associate brothers of the occult Thule Group—interpreted the forces of light as fair-haired Aryans, asserting that they must destroy the forces of

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darkness (incarnated by the dark-complexioned Semites).

Necessary to this destruction was the acquisition of the one, true, complete, integral knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge, hidden in the past, contained the secret of the genesis of the world and, as Hitler believed, the justification for Nazi political theory.

Jean-Michel Angebert traces Hitler's many quests for this knowledge, including dispatches to a mountain in Tibet whose legends tied in with the original habitat of man, and searches for the lost Holy Grail, a carved stone whose runic inscriptions, Hitler believed, would unlock the supreme knowledge. The authors carefully document many other beliefs and practices shared by the Third Reich and neo-Pagan cults. Perhaps their most startling assertion—one bound to challenge earlier scholarship—is that Hitler was himself possessed by the devil and had the power to possess others.

The only man possessing the wherewithal for rousing Germany from its lethargic sleep, Hitler was but a machine of the new Gnostics. As *The Occult and the Third Reich* shows, the Nazi movement was not an isolated aberration of modern Germany, but merely the most recent flowering of traditions that dominated western society for centuries before Hitler's birth—and could well rise to power again.

# THE OCCULT AND THE THIRD REICH

THE MYSTICAL ORIGINS OF  
NAZISM AND THE SEARCH  
FOR THE HOLY GRAIL



Jean-Michel Angebert

*Translated by* LEWIS A. M. SUMBERG

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## Translator's Preface

NOT LONG AGO the Soviet government announced that a careful examination of the charred human remains found in the Führer bunker in Berlin conclusively identified them as those of Adolf Hitler. More recently, the government of West Germany announced that the dental work in part of a skull also found in Berlin was definitely that of Martin Bormann, the number-three man in the Nazi hierarchy, who had long been thought to be hiding somewhere in South America. As of this writing, the film *Hitler: The Last Ten Days* is having its premiere in Munich and in other cities throughout Western Europe. Last year, in Germany alone, not less than eight major works appeared on the subject of Nazism and Hitler. In the United States there has also been a tremendous renewal of interest in Hitler and the whole Nazi era.

If the list continues to grow, it is because civilized men are not satisfied with the interpretations offered to date to explain the National Socialist phenomenon, which remains *the* enigma of our times. In the wake of World War II, as the mind-boggling horrors of the concentration camps



shocked the European conscience, some men of thought and action all but rejected 2,000 years of Christianity and turned to existentialism. From this has come a substantial part of the intellectual literature of the past twenty-five years. Even so, although these existentialists were revolted by the Nazi enigma, they did not address themselves to its underlying reasons.

Historians, sociologists, and political scientists did not do much better. Quantifiers for the most part and frustrated by the apparent discontinuity of events and facts in the mass of testimonies, records, and documents which came into their possession, they succeeded only in elucidating facts already well-known, reshuffling data, and shifting points of emphasis. With their objective minds they viewed the facts somewhat more dispassionately perhaps, but they were no more successful than the men of letters in raising the veil of the enigma or in deepening our understanding of it.

Only recently has it become apparent that if scholars have failed to get to the root of the Nazi blasphemy, it is because they have brought conventional outlooks and methodologies to their examination of an unconventional phenomenon. The present work is by two of the most resourceful, intuitive, and tenacious minds yet to approach the subject. It sees Nazism as only the most recent manifestation of a militant neo-Paganism locked in a death struggle with its arch-enemy, traditional Christianity, a struggle which will go on until the end of time. Its most recent roots go back to the Middle Ages, when the neo-Gnostic heresies, particularly Catharism, forcefully challenged the Church's spiritual authority everywhere in Europe, particularly in the south of France<sup>1</sup> and in the Rhenish provinces of Germany.

The authors show that the driving force behind this neo-Paganism emanates from a remote moment of the distant past, from the tradition of Atlantis and of Thule (Hyperborea), whose myths of gods walking among men—myths

preserved in the Celtic, Scandinavian, and Germanic mythologies, transmitted by an elitist hierarchy of the initiate—never diminished. In this cosmology the key word is *Gnosis*: integral, absolute, Ultimate Knowledge, transmitted to man by the gods through the ancient runic writings and exemplified in the symbolism of the pagan Aryan Grail. In the mind of the Church, nothing could be further removed from the faith and ethics of traditional Christianity than the Gnostic doctrines promulgated by the racists Zoroaster and Mani, with their emphasis on an elite's attainment of Primordial Knowledge and their belief in the two worlds, one created by the good god and the other by the bad god.

The titanic struggle for men's minds is exemplified in the dual symbolism attendant upon the Grail and its quest, which the French and German troubadours of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries celebrated in stories of the Knights of the Round Table. To the ancient Aryan peoples, the Grail was the stone bearing the sacred inscriptions of Primordial Knowledge given by the gods to the initiate. By the time of the incipient Cathar (neo-Manichean) heresy in the twelfth century, it had been "Christianized" into the sacred vase in which Joseph of Arimathaea had collected the blood of Christ and had become the symbol of Knowledge, assuring the "elect" the means of fulfillment and salvation. The medieval Church, scarcely oblivious to the challenge posed by the elitist doctrine embodied in the symbol, sought to transform it into a symbol of faith in a universal salvation represented by the Precious Blood which had been shed for all mankind. This emphasis on Ultimate Faith, rather than Ultimate Knowledge, was only partly successful, as subsequent events were to prove.

The authors bring brilliant insight to our understanding of this "battle of the symbols." They show how the Nazi high priesthood (Sebottendorf, Rosenberg, Feder, Hess, Himmler, Hitler, *et al.*), long steeped in an esotericism practiced as an instrument of its neo-Pagan faith, sent the bril-



liant young medievalist and SS officer Otto Rahn to the ancient Cathar lands in the south of France in search of the unholy Grail of the Aryans.<sup>2</sup> What he found near the last bastion of the Cathars—the sun temple-fortress of Montségur (identified by Rahn as the legendary Montsalvat, where the Grail had been kept)—and what subsequently was brought back to Germany, shaped the mind of the Third Reich from that point forth. As the inheritor of the holiest relic of the Aryans, Hitler became the Supreme Initiate, the Messiah restoring to the West the meaning and secret of its origins, as the Thousand-Year Reich of the race of the First Masters of the world was inaugurated.

The significance of these findings is that there is thus as much reason to speak of a neo-Pagan continuum or tradition in the West<sup>3</sup> as of a Judeo-Christian one. The first, like the second, has its dogma, ritual, symbols, prophets, and adepts. As in all major religions, it is through the priesthood (as exemplified in the Nazi strain by the esoteric Vril Society, Thule Society, Society of the Seekers of the Grail, and seminaries of the *Ordensburgen*)<sup>4</sup> that it perpetuates itself, by means of a concentration of occult power located in its initiatory centers, whose knowledge and symbols are as inaccessible to the masses it governs as to the enemy.

Another contribution which the authors make to our interest in the Nazi phenomenon is their assessment of the demoniacal side of German National Socialism. Was Hitler the devil? Objections of some "serious" academicians notwithstanding, the authors feel that there is hard evidence showing not only that Hitler was possessed, but also that he possessed others. At the same time to affirm, as did one recent writer on the subject, that "He *was* Nazism,"<sup>5</sup> would be an extravagant claim. At the very most we can say that through the most recent resurgence of neo-Paganism, Hitler actualized and articulated, in its most extreme and perverted form, a Gnostic racism that had existed everywhere in Europe, including Germany, centuries before his phe-

nomenal rise to power. Its vitality has in no way been diminished by his death. Viewed within this larger context, and taking into account the unparalleled evil incarnated in this particular Antichrist, Hitler's life and death appear as but one episode in the continuing struggle between neo-Paganism and Christianity.

The present book marks a giant step forward in Hitlerian scholarship. It is the first work to demonstrate that the Nazi cosmology was an intricate synthesis of the historic, philosophic, religious, social, and occult, nurtured by an ancient neo-Paganism whose profile is accurately revealed for the first time in the Cathar heresy of the Middle Ages. This being so, it is only in these same terms made operative by the phenomenon itself that we can understand it.

The ability of neo-Paganism to reaffirm itself militantly and contest with Christianity for men's minds and bodies tells us that the Nazi nightmare is the most recent but not the final act in a larger human tragedy that is still being played out. It would be foolish to see the phenomenon as a specifically "German problem"; how unbelievably shallow-rooted the Christian faith and ethic are was amply demonstrated by the unparalleled recrudescence of neo-Paganism everywhere the swastika went.

The rise of occultism and the practice of the black arts by the myriad secret societies—particularly the kind represented by satanism—was noted everywhere in the Germany of the 1920s. That we are witnessing much the same phenomenon in the United States today in the ominous and prodigious growth of politico-religious elitist cults represented by satanism, by Manson-type "families,"<sup>6</sup> and by the epidemic of occult-inspired political assassinations,<sup>7</sup> should cause civilized men the gravest concern. The authors are doubtless right in predicting that certain practitioners of the black arts will yet play a major role in determining the shape of a not too distant future.

In the present translation we have thought it useful to



further elucidate a number of names, places, and terms: Translator's footnotes are designated [T.N.]; for the more lengthy passages of Plato quoted by the authors, we have used the eminently readable translation edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns.<sup>8</sup>

In the interest of clarity and taking into account the readership at which the present edition is directed, some portions of the original French text (as, for example, in the plot summaries of Wagner's works) have been edited and reorganized. Our constant concern has been to render faithfully and accurately the intention and sense of the original.

LEWIS A. M. SUMBERG

## Introduction

IN SPITE OF the thousands of studies on National Socialism that have appeared since the end of World War II, the Hitlerian phenomenon remains an enigma. Most of those who have written on the subject have treated the Nazi problem from a purely rational point of view and, consequently, have gone wide of their mark.

The acceleration of history, with its assault upon our senses, overwhelms us. It is increasingly difficult to find a definitive work on any subject. The methods used in historical research are themselves frustrated by the absurd practice of not utilizing records until thirty years after they first appeared.

How then does one approach the question of the secret beginnings of the National Socialist movement, whose records have either been carefully tucked away or scattered to the winds? There can be no doubt that some of the missing archives were taken away at the last minute by some of the faithful and hidden somewhere deep in the Bavarian Alps. The Allies made off with everything which had not



been burned, and it is unlikely that we shall ever get to see these documents.<sup>1</sup>

This means that the historian is reduced to an exacting type of research and to making comparisons which are strange, to say the least, but often significant. In our particular case the reading of a work all but unobtainable today, the *Crusade Against the Grail* by Otto Rahn, was the point of departure into the secret origins of the Hitlerian cosmogony. *Lucifer's Court in Europe* by the same author confirmed our first hypothesis: There was indeed a link between National Socialism and the quest for the Grail of the Cathars. Saint-Loup's work, *New Cathars for Montségur* (*Nouveaux cathares pour Montségur*), which appeared in 1969, further confirmed our basic premise and prompted us to pursue this same line of thinking.

Since then we have received encouragement from all sides, and what was initially an inquiry of a purely speculative kind turned out to be something which, we urgently feel, should be brought to the attention of the general public.

The historian must not run away from danger, whatever the source, but rather do what he can to shed light on the darker pages of the past. Historians of the Third Reich have been unsuccessful in their attempts to explain that phenomenon because they have failed to free themselves from conformist ways of looking at history. The Hitlerian myth can be understood only if viewed in the context of the particular philosophical system that produced it, which is itself but one link in a historical tradition going back over centuries.

Those who induced Germany to embrace the swastika are not dead. They are still among us, just as they have been in every era, and doubtless will continue to be until the Apocalypse. National Socialism was for them but a means, and Hitler was but an instrument. The undertaking failed. What they are now trying to do is to revive the myth using other means.

The authors went to Montségur. We had chosen a beautiful day in July in the Midi where the sun sings the burning love of the land of Aquitaine, baptized by the blood of the Perfects. Once we had passed Lavelanet, a sleepy village with its century-old spinning-mills reminiscent of the shuttles of the weavers, we took the road to Montferrier which leads toward the Saint-Barthélemy mountain mass. After this last village we noticed the imposing hulk of the Pog as we were about to cross the Tremblement pass. The castle stood high above, a dazzling, stone sarcophagus, awe-inspiring in its tragic grandeur.

On the slopes of this Mount Tabor of the Albigensians, we did not meet Otto Rahn, but we could imagine him, full of enthusiasm, making this climb countless times, obstinately looking for the route taken by the Cathars to hide the Grail from the barbarian covetousness of the victors. Fernand Niel is one of the last Aquitainians to have remembered seeing the young German:

There was also *The Crusade Against the Grail*. Its author was this stranger I had run into in the village of Montségur; <sup>2</sup> his clothes were as tattered as mine, and I had not ventured to go over and talk with him. I read his book as one should read it, that is, as a novel, but he showed me that the importance of Montségur could go far beyond something of a purely local or regional interest. For a while he got me into the legends and stories of the Grail and their commentators, who left me as undecided as I had been before. And I concluded: Montsalvage, the Grail castle, did once really exist, or else it is a pure fabrication of the authors of the Middle Ages. If this is true no need to say any more about it; otherwise, the Grail castle is Montségur, and none other.<sup>3</sup>

And Niel adds:

Of course I also read the unfavorable reviews of Rahn's book, but they have not made me forget *The Crusade Against the Grail*. I saw from what quarter the criticism was coming and, all considered, I have always felt myself closer to Otto Rahn than to his detractors.



Fernand Niel showed what a good prophet he was, for Rahn's influence has not diminished with time, as attests the recent reediting of his works in Germany.

Among tourists from all countries, drawn by curiosity or the morbid taste for death, one hears increasingly these days the harsh sounds of the German language. This makes one recall the Golden Rose-Cross, an esoteric movement which had taken root in Germany and in the Low Countries and has, for a long time, planted markers at Montségur.

As we came around the enormous wall of the keep of Montségur we noticed a strange symbol fastened to the rough exterior. It was a pentagram of stone, wrong way up, with its point down. We were informed later that it was a symbol of black magic, attached hastily by means of a fast-setting cement by some members of one of those mysterious groups who still prowl around the castle. It would take some considerable doing to remove the thing. The unknown desecrators probably were members of the group called "Werewolves," unless they were of the "*Wandervogel*" ("Migratory Birds") or of the *Neuauther* (also known as the "Red Knights"), an underground branch of the famous Society of the Seekers of the Grail. José Dupré, a regular visitor to Montségur, describes them:

Made up of men of all ages, but with a majority of young, these groups have a paramilitary appearance. Bearing banners and standards, and wearing parts of uniforms (berets and special neckerchiefs, insignia, etc.), they have a structure by ranks. Thus, there are among them knights and valets . . . There hardly passes a day that one of these groups does not come to one of the hotels of Montségur and fill up a page in the guestbook. They draw symbols clearly associated with black magic (a snarling panther's head, an eagle's claw, etc.), while one of their propaganda sheets boasts: "We have conquered and pillaged the fortress of Montségur." Indeed, one of these associations has started to build in Germany a tower with stone from the Pog; each of its members must bring back some fragments of Montségur.

There have also been acts of vandalism committed against the stela of the Meadow of the Burned, which they use for target practice and whose degradation proves that the struggle around Montségur has not yet come to an end.

The purpose of this book is to raise the veil of history and to reveal some of the great currents running through it—secret, underground currents, to be sure, but very real and exceedingly powerful, particularly when they are manipulated by men imbued with a fanatical belief in their mission. The occult forces confront one another in the shadows, while on stage, impassive performers quietly act out an immutable drama under the very eyes of an unseeing public.

Those who seek to penetrate these mysteries are immediately branded as sensationalists; but we have decided to go ahead, whatever may be the reactions of the sanctimonious and the self-righteous.

If a small flame of hope still shines in the heart of man, we wager that our work will not have been for naught; that is our most fervent wish. The reader is tired of lies and pseudo-historical frauds. To him we offer our work in good faith.



PART ONE  
OTTO RAHN  
AND THE CRUSADE  
AGAINST THE GRAIL



# 1

## The Grail: Christian Relic, Pagan Relic

### THE SATANIC QUEST

BERLIN, APRIL 30, 1945. The Chancery gardens are like a moonscape; the city has become the Sodom and Gomorrah of the Twentieth Century.

Twenty-seven feet below ground, in the Führerbunker, the spider waits in his web. Followed by Goebbels and his aide-de-camp, Adolf Hitler prophesies: "You'll see, the Russians will suffer the greatest, the bloodiest defeat of their history before the gates of Berlin!" But Goebbels, who three months earlier was proclaiming that "if we have to go under, the whole earth will tremble," now was saying for the benefit of anyone interested: "We're not just talking about the military defeat of the Third Reich; it's a whole way of life itself which is crumbling."

Twenty-five years after that déclaration a question still remains unanswered: What indeed was this new conception of the world, this *Weltanschauung* which National Socialist Germany dreamed of extending to the whole world?

We still do not know on what foundations the Nazi view



of man was based (at least in the minds of its mentors). At best, it was thought that the answer might lie in a certain lodge of the Vrili (offshoot of the Rosicrucians) and in the personality of Karl Haushofer.

It was along these lines that different writers long have been working, among them Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier in their well-known work *The Morning of the Magicians* (*Le Matin des magiciens*).<sup>1</sup> The latter, however, were mistaken as to the particular tradition to which Nazism was linked. To be sure, this tradition smacked of the East, but it had grafted itself onto a major Western tradition which, for convenience, we shall call the Hyperborean Grail tradition.

As for ourselves, we prefer a more objective and historical approach to the phenomenon. When we stop to consider that Catharism is the most recent and most perfected form of Manichaeism, we are not surprised at the relationship between Hitlerism, which is a striking manifestation of the new Gnosis, and the Cathar philosophy of the two worlds of Light and Darkness in conflict. In the Nazi cosmology the sun played a prime role (as it did for the Cathars) as a sacred symbol of the Aryans, in contrast to the feminine and magical symbolism of the moon, revered by the Semitic peoples. This helps us understand the hate bordering on sheer madness which Hitler had for the Jews. In his dualistic outlook, and faithful to the prophetic inspiration of Mani, the Führer saw in the Jewish people, with their black hair and swarthy complexion, the dark side of the human species, while the blond and blue-eyed Aryans constituted the light side of humanity. By mercilessly applying a biological selection, Hitler undertook to extirpate from the material world its impure elements (which had been introduced by Jewish satanism and by the Hebrew "conspiracy"), to lead it back in glory onto the triumphant road to its divine origins.

This attempt—worthy of a Luciferian ego—is not, however, all that new. There have always been, in every age,

madmen or prophets preaching a gospel in flagrant opposition to those religions revealed and preached to the masses by temporal authority. But few of them can claim the horrible distinction of having brought about the death of millions of human beings.

There is no doubt that the means for destruction which modern man possesses are not altogether unrelated to this slaughter. Still, it must be realized that when a man, a mere mortal, thinks he alone holds truth and the key to all knowledge, he is ready to reduce the world to ashes to impose his ideas. This is precisely what Hitler did. Just as the Cathars (and before them the Manichaeans and Gnostics) had been consumed in the flames of the funeral pyre, gaining thereby the palms of martyrdom, the world now saw the innocent and persecuted Lamb turn into a devouring Moloch and the new pyre of Auschwitz burn other "heretics."<sup>2</sup> So it is that history, far from teaching us lessons, is an endless recommencement.

But violence did not succeed where martyrdom had failed. The hour of the Gnostic triumph had not yet sounded, for two powers rose up against the common enemy: (1) the Catholic Church, eternal enemy of the Gnosis, which it pursues relentlessly in all its forms, and (2) the Jewish faith, which wants to use the mysteries of integral knowledge exclusively for its own enhancement.

Nonetheless, the Cathars, philosophers, writers, and prophets had risen up against the conformity of their time long before, and they had tried to find once more within themselves the secrets of the universe and of the primordial tradition. From the time of Zoroaster (the Persian prophet who received his initiation from the Solar Verb himself, Ahura-Mazda) down to Mani (founder of a religion with awe-inspiring principles but one in contradiction with Christianity as taught by the Church), we encounter Gnosticism, a movement of such importance that it alone would justify our writing this book.



A philosophy which finds its place within Christianity while claiming to transcend it, Gnosis offers its believers a cosmogony—that is, a conception and an explanation of the universe, material as well as spiritual—an outlook which was bound to attract large numbers of the intellectual elite unsatisfied by the apologetic commentaries on the Gospels. The Gnostics possessed an esoteric knowledge, in contrast to the common “Pistis,” or belief of the masses. This true doctrine, as revealed to an elite, was not to be spread among the common people. This aristocratic religion was contrary to the principles of the early Church, which took to its bosom all believers, whatever their level of understanding, and thus threatened Gnosticism’s survival. That is why the Church Fathers systematically denigrated Gnostic writers in order to deprecate this philosophical movement in the eyes of Christians. Soon, refutation having proven ineffective, persecutions followed; and the great prophet Mani, worthy continuator of Gnosis, was thrown into prison and put to death. His writings were destroyed. Catholic bishops relentlessly pursued the Manichaeans, who had to endure terrible persecutions. The heresy was finally stamped out; but while Manichaeism was extirpated in seventh-century Asia Minor, it found refuge in the heart of the Byzantine Empire among the Bulgarian communities who, three centuries later, introduced it to Italy. From there it spread rapidly across medieval Europe into Germany, France, and Hungary.

But it was in southern France, in the provinces of Provence and Languedoc, that the heresy was particularly well-received. In that lovely land of Aquitaine, a civilization flourished among the Visigothic nobility that was far in advance of that in the north. Espousing Manichaean principles, which they further refined, and drawing heavily on the Gospel according to John (particularly his Apocalypse, whose vision reinforces faith by providing it with a sacred cosmogony), the Cathars (from the Greek *catharos*, mean-

ing “pure”), whose own morals were exemplary, denounced the corruption and baseness of the clergy of the time, a clergy mired in material wealth and already a prisoner of the Prince of the World. In their secret meetings, the purest among the Albigensians (another name for the Cathars), who were called *Bons hommes* (Virtuous Ones) or *Parfaits* (Perfect Ones), preached a more sophisticated doctrine drawn from the ancient books of the high priests of the Sun and of all the great initiates, from the pharaoh Akhnaton to the divine Plato, heir to the tradition of Atlantis. Thus, the Pentagon—Pythagorean symbol of the sun—was a sacred sign to the Cathars, and that is why they built their temple-fortress Montségur in this architectural form.

We shall have a closer look at the Cathar phenomenon later, but for now the important point is this: Massacred, tracked down, burned at the stake, the Albigensians were tortured in the name of the Roman Catholic Church and the Inquisition; yet the flame of the Albigensian spirit never died. The Templars, in the very bosom of Christianity, took up the torch. However, the secret books—scattered, lost, or of which only fragments had survived—were now understood only partially; and Rosicrucianism—a sect born after the destruction of the Order of the Temple—transmitted only an adulterated doctrine which showed signs of a spiritual decadence and found its low point in Freemasonry, the shrunken shadow of a once-pure esoteric doctrine.

Following the Protestant schism, which split the Catholic Church until the seventeenth century, the Gnostic traditions became mixed with foreign elements. This accounts for the present confusion surrounding the various sects, each of which, since the Renaissance, lays claim to being the sole depository of truth through an unbroken affiliation with the esoteric tradition. Among these, one group stands out because of its magnetism and spiritual vigor, which singles it out as an initiatory center of the highest significance: the sect of the *Illuminati* (Illuminated Ones) of Bavaria,



founded in the eighteenth century by Adam Weishaupt, professor of canon law at Ingolstadt University.

The *Illuminaten Orden* based their beliefs on the Johanne Gospel, and in this they were different from the other Masonic lodges, which accepted Jews as members. Thus, the Illuminati indeed prefigured racism (or perhaps one might better say, segregation) before our own times. As in every secret society, the code of conduct was severe and left no room for individualism. Members greeted one another by placing their right hand across the eyes, as if blinded by the sunlight. This sign was in close correlation with the light and, it follows, with their name "Illuminati." We should note here that sun worship, of pagan origins, distinguished the Illuminati from the other forms of Freemasonry, which are based on Christianity. One more fact deserves our attention: The Illuminist lodges gave courses in what we would call today applied psychology, intended to sway the hostile or the recalcitrant.

While the *Illuminaten Orden* appears to have suffered a decline about 1790, it did not by any means disappear. There were numerous resurgences of the movement, one of the last occurring in 1912, as if by some strange turn of fate, in Austria. . . . It should be noted that Illuminism has always been more prevalent in that country, representing for its practitioners a bulwark against the exceedingly strong Jewish culture in that part of Europe.

Illuminism inevitably paved the way for pan-Germanism by reason of its being an autonomous offshoot of Freemasonry, whose goals it subverted and perverted. Internationalism was supplanted by nationalism, and Christian humanism gave way to racism, with the expression "Semitic race" making its appearance about this time. It can properly be said that racist Gnosticism dates from this same period.

All of these tendencies were to come into full bloom after 1914 in the famous Thule Society, which was the seminary of the neo-Gnostic racist groups and whose fundamental

doctrine taught that good was Aryan and evil was Semitic. It was on this common ground of neo-Manichaeism philosophy, preached by its high priest Dietrich Eckart, that all of the cults sprung from the Illuminist branch met, of which the best known are the Hammer Union (by reference to the hammer of the god Thor in Nordic mythology) and the Wandering Comrades (*Wandervogel*), and of which the most secret is the Society of the Seekers of the Grail, which was destined to play an earthshaking role in the events of 1938. It is no accident that the guiding principles of the Thule Society are identical, or nearly so, to those of the NSDAP.<sup>3</sup>

The mentor of the Thule Society, Dietrich Eckart (born March 23, 1868; died December 26, 1923), participated in Hitler's abortive putsch of March 9, 1923. We also find in this secret society Anton Drexler, founder of the German Workers' Party<sup>4</sup> and political heir of Eckart until the latter took notice one day of a certain corporal. Not surprisingly, Adolf Hitler belonged to the sect, as did Alfred Rosenberg and many others. . . .

The main purpose of the Thule Society in the mind of its founders was to constitute a rallying point for all the occult societies of like persuasion and thereby to remerge with ancient Germanic tradition. As to the legend of Thule, from which the sect borrowed its name, what has survived until our own times, through the German *Lied*, is the cult of the Gold Cup. The use of the sacred cup in libations was peculiar to the Celto-Nordic peoples. We know from mythology that Iris (whose name means "rainbow") used a gold cup to draw from the Styx the water used by the gods for their oaths. The ancients believed that the race of Bow—"born of the rainbow," that is, the Nordic or "Arctic" race—was the first (the elite) of the human races.

The origin of the sacredness of the cup used in religious libations is explained in Plato's *Timaeus*. Plato relates that the ten gods of Atlantis began their gatherings by offering



up a young bull whose blood was collected in a cup. The spurting of the blood, symbol of life and renewal, confers at the same time a sacredness on the receptacle which contains it. It would appear that this is the earliest origin of the Grail, which would then necessarily be related to the Indo-European tradition. But this is only one hypothesis; there are others which stress the role of Buddhism, although not ruling out the first.

However that may be, this concept, born in the West, had a long peregrination in the East before finally coming back into the hands of the Celts or, more exactly, those of their priests—the Druids—at the time of the voyage of Joseph of Arimathaea. It is this same cup, mute witness to its own drama, which according to the same Western legend (which itself assuredly contains a fundamental truth) must have belonged to the Cathars. It had a double symbolism. On the one hand it represented the *Vessel of Knowledge* and on the other, the *Cup of the Pure Blood*.

The Cathars, who had used it for mystico-religious purposes, hid it to keep it from being profaned during the persecutions of the thirteenth century. This explains why all subsequent efforts to find the Grail were to center on the last bastion of the Albigensian heresy, Montségur. It also explains the keen interest of the German seekers of the Thule Society in this Languedocian eagle's nest, particularly in light of the fact that among various groups committed to the search was the Society of the Seekers of the Grail. The Society counted among its members the brilliant Otto Rahn, who was to play the main role in the drama about to unfold.

#### THE SEEKER

One fine summer day in 1931, those inhabitants of Lavelanet accustomed to rising early could have glimpsed a tall, slender young man, with a determined look and wearing a scout shirt and heavy Alpine climbing boots, starting

toward the château of Montségur, whose white sarcophaguslike ruins stood out in stark relief against the emerald forest lying beyond. This twenty-seven-year-old man, who was climbing the paths leading to the *Pog* (Provençal for "peak"), might well have started people guessing. Who was he and what was he doing in this inhospitable place lost in the very heart of the wildest region of the Ariège?

Otto Rahn—for this was the name of this young German in love with the Cathar civilization—paused briefly upon arriving at the threshold of the immense door of the fortress. What thoughts crossed his mind as he entered this mysterious place just being touched by the first rays of the solar star?

Montségur, the Mount Tabor of the Cathari of Aquitaine and the last refuge of the Albigensian heresy, is one of those high eyries where the presence of the spirit is undeniable. From time immemorial, the *Pog*, or spur of rock ledge on which the château is situated, has been considered a sacred place. As far back as earliest historic times, the Iberians gathered on the Pyrenean "Mount Tabor" at the approach of the autumn equinox. This explains the presence on one of the slopes of the Soularac (one of the two peaks of the Tabe mass) of an unusual cromlech formed of two upright, tangent stone circles. This monument, which was the object of a religious cult during neolithic times, has never ceased to attract the curious, and the Catholic Church sometime later chose this very location for a chapel dedicated to Saint Bartholomew (whose feast is August 24), thereby adapting to its own ends the meaning of the old pagan customs. There is also a tradition that the two ponds in the Saint-Barthélemy mountain mass—Trout Pond and Devil Pond—are enchanted spots. According to the lore of the region, throwing a single stone into either of them will unleash the wrath of Heaven. Curiously, storms in this mountain region are both frequent and extremely violent. For those who relish encounters with the Otherworldly, let us note that Dru-



ids, found everywhere in the Pyrenees at the time of the Celts, drew a magic circle at this spot which the uninitiated were forbidden to cross.

Apart from its impregnable site the château of Montségur is of strange architectural design: The fortress walls, for instance, are without crenelations, with the exception of the eastern wall perched at the very edge of a precipitous drop.<sup>5</sup> A massive main door, the absence of flanking towers, the lack of any serious provision for protecting an important part of the rocky eyrie, the very shape of the edifice itself makes Montségur a unique monument. As it stands today the château resembles a long stone chest, pentagonal in form, to which has been adjoined a rectangular dungeon. Everything suggests that the edifice was built not for military ends, but rather according to a plan for sacred architecture. One can safely say (and the whole Albigensian epic confirms our view) that Montségur was in fact a temple dedicated to a cult, a holy site that was capable of putting up a fierce resistance in the event of an attack.

The incisive observations of Fernand Niel in his book *Montségur, the Holy Mountain* (*Montségur, la montagne inspirée*) prove that the layout of the edifice lends itself to plotting with astonishing accuracy the principal positions of the sun in its ascendancy. An ancient Manichaean temple consecrated to sun worship, Montségur became the Mount Tabor of the Cathari by means of a spiritual affiliation which today is practically impossible to deny.

Other castles in Aquitaine, it should be noted, such as Quéribus in the Corbières (which also served as an Albigensian refuge) and Puivert (where the mother of Trencavel, Viscount of Carcassonne, held her court of love), possess an architecture much like that of Montségur.

Henri Coltel, who conducted extensive research on this subject in southwestern France, discovered important evidence confirming Fernand Niel's findings. He saw some

forty-odd subterranean passageways dating back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and he found that (1) all of the subterraneans have a chapel hall wherein is found a sort of altar; (2) for a given region all the subterraneans are so oriented that they converge toward a single point. Coltel became convinced that they were not primarily refuges, but rather temples where the Cathars, before the period of the persecutions, celebrated their initiation ceremonies.

In 1931, Otto Rahn either knew or had a premonition about this, which explains why he spent three months in the Montségur region before returning for a second stay in 1937, following the publication of his work *Crusade Against the Grail* (*Kreuzzug gegen den Gral*), which had first appeared in Germany in 1933.<sup>6</sup>

But in 1931 the inhabitants of the little community of Montségur were completely unaware of the signal honor being bestowed upon them by a certain secret society, which was feverishly engaged in founding the Third Reich. The fact of the matter is that this German intellectual had been given the mission by no less a person than Alfred Rosenberg, author of the notorious *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, of verifying the accuracy of the following hypothesis: Montségur was indeed the Montsalvat, or Mount of Salvation, of Arthurian legend and did hold somewhere within it the Holy Grail.

To appreciate fully the importance of this undertaking, it should be noted that Rahn was an authority on Aquitaine. It is a well-known fact that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Cathar missionary activity ranged as far east as Germany and was particularly active in Franconia,<sup>7</sup> which explains the intense and enduring interest of the Germans in this kind of pseudo-religious thought. It should be noted that Eckbert, rector of the Cathedral of Cologne, mentions the Rhenish Cathari celebrating a feastday in honor of their supreme initiator Mani,<sup>8</sup> sufficient proof that by this



time, the Cathar sect was already solidly established on Teutonic soil.

It must be supposed that Rahn's research had strong support in the highest Party circles or, at the very least, that his backing was better than that of his predecessors, for his book aroused great interest throughout Germany and in the Languedoc region of France. In his book the young scholar situated the Grail at Montségur and claimed that the Cathars were the last inheritors of the sacred object. But most important, he put forth the hypothesis that the Grail could be something quite different from the emerald cup of Christian legend. Rahn's second sojourn at Montségur was not nearly as long. Although he had the blessing of Hitler's "Sacred College," it seems that he did not get anywhere this time with his investigations, judging by the fact that a third trip was to be scheduled for some future date. . . . A second work by Rahn appeared in Germany in 1936 which confirmed (if further proof were necessary!) his talents as a historian and philosopher: In *Lucifer's Court in Europe* the author adduces political data in further support of his theories concerning the Cathars.

After his trip in 1937, Rahn went back to Germany and was never to return to Languedoc. Rumor has it that in 1945 he was beheaded in a concentration camp. We do not agree with this hypothesis, which has been put forth by Gérard de Sède in his work *The Treasure of the Cathari* (*Le trésor cathare*).<sup>9</sup> We are more inclined to accept the explanation given by Saint-Loup in his last book, *New Cathari for Montségur* (*Nouveaux Cathares pour Montségur*).<sup>10</sup> The inquiry, undertaken by Saint-Loup with the assistance of the authorities of the German Federal Republic, confirms that Rahn held a high rank in Himmler's SS. At the same time records left by Rosenberg, the Nazi Minister of Culture, enabled Saint-Loup to learn the fate of the Nazi intellectual: "Rahn killed himself by taking a dose of cyanide

on top of Mount Kufstein, for politico-mystical reasons as well as for personal ones."<sup>11</sup>

The first part of the explanation would make sense, considering the degree of Rahn's personal involvement. All too aware of the ultimate significance of his findings, he would have preferred to the total war being prepared by the Third Reich the revelation to the white race of its true nature, which would have as its corollary the transformation of Germany into a community of "pure ones," or (Cathar) *perfecti*. This conception of Rahn had long been opposed to the policies pursued by the Nazis, and he was faced with the choice of capitulating or committing suicide. Having given up all hope of settling in Languedoc (he knew too much), his only recourse was suicide, and for this, he chose poison. It was much in the manner of Cathar suicide (*Endura*) that Rahn left a world which he no longer understood and which would soon rekindle—with crematoria, phosphor bombs, and the atomic cataclysm at Hiroshima—a Montségur funeral pyre of global dimensions.

#### THE GRAIL: MYTH OR REALITY?

In all legends there is an object endowed with extraordinary properties which, at some point, disappears mysteriously. The symbolic meaning most often associated with the Grail is that it was the chalice used by Jesus during the Last Supper, the chalice in which Joseph of Arimathea collected Christ's blood as it ran from the wound made in his side by the lance of the Roman centurion Longinus.<sup>12</sup> From this alone it would be apparent that the Chalice is very often associated with the Lance. But the subject of the interdependence of such symbols is a study in itself and would take us far afield at this point.

As for the Cup, we shall discuss its meaning to the ancients in subsequent chapters devoted to the Great Tradi-



tion. For now let us simply say that the loss of the Grail (sacred vessel of Knowledge) or of an equivalent symbol is taken to mean much the same thing as the loss of the Tradition itself, with all the spiritual impoverishment that this implies.

For those who believe in the unity of the Great Tradition—that is to say, in the fundamental and transcendental unity of all the religions, legends, and myriad mythologies—it seems clear that Christianity annexed the Grail myth, transforming it into the emerald cup containing the blood of Christ, and thereby changing altogether its original symbolic meaning.

Thus, for the traditionalists, the Grail myth is the reflection of a lost teaching. Such was the interpretation of the National Socialists, whose philosophy was based upon their seeing in the Grail stone a law of life valid only for certain races.

In his book *King of the World* (*Le roi du monde*), René Guénon did not go far enough when he declared:

What we are trying to say is that the Grail represents simultaneously two things which are intimately related and interdependent: He who possesses wholly the "Primordial Tradition" and who has attained the degree of perfect knowledge which is implied in such possession is by this fact reintegrated into the fullness of the "Primordial State." To these two things—"Primordial State" and "Primordial Tradition"—is related the double meaning inherent in the word "Grail" itself, for by one of those strange word associations which often in symbolism play no small role and whose implications usually go beyond what one initially might suspect, the Grail is at once a vase (from the Provençal *grasale*) and a religious book, a *gradual* (Latin *gradāle*, or *graduāle*). The latter signifies most explicitly the Tradition, while the former has to do more properly with the state of the object.

The whole argument concerning the Grail turns on its double meaning, which can be put in the form of a question: Was it a sacred vase (symbol of faith) or a secret

book (symbol of lost knowledge)? None of the historians working on the period preceding World War II seemed interested in answering this fundamental question first raised by René Guénon, and only in the preface of Louis Pauwel's *Morning of the Magicians* (1960) is the entire matter reopened: "*National Socialism is Guénonism plus Panzer divisions!*"

Still, when one attempts to explain the phenomenon called National Socialism one becomes aware that its quintessential characteristics are both simple and complex. Our answer to Guénon's question can be simply stated in our second hypothesis: The Grail is the sacred Book of the Aryans, lost and then found again, to be finally hidden at Montségur by the Cathars who were unable to decipher it. The rest seems to be fairly obvious; it remained only for some modern specialists versed in the decipherment of pagan inscriptions to rediscover the Grail stone and to translate it into a clear language in order that the Aryan Tradition not be lost. The secret of the genesis of the world thus revealed to the Nazi masters, it would then be used to justify their political theories, through the irrefutable proof of a *millenary* writing (in the sense of *millenum*, that which is *millenary*, corresponding to the Flood).

It was under these auspices that Otto Rahn, eminent specialist in Catharism, was sent by the Nazi hierarchy into Albigensian country to locate the famous Grail stone mentioned in Wolfram von Eschenbach's verse (notably, in his *Parzival*), wherein the poet speaks of a "precious stone."<sup>13</sup> The Manichaeans, who were originally from Persia (and therefore Aryans), associated the word *Gorr* ("precious stone") with the word *Al* ("splinter, stylus"), from whence the contraction *Graal*, with the meaning "precious engraved stone," which would be, historically speaking, the best explanation, taking into account the etymological evidence.

We can now more fully understand the keen interest that the Nazi leaders, particularly Rosenberg, had in such re-



search. The Nazi Minister of Culture was to say with some considerable emphasis: "Today there awakens a new faith, the myth of blood, the faith, too, for defending the blood, the divine essence of man." At the same time the enthusiastic reaction of Hitler to Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century* takes on additional meaning: "When you read Rosenberg's new book, you will understand these things, for it is the most powerful work of its kind, greater even than that of H. S. Chamberlain" (remarks noted by Otto Strasser).

And what should we think of the revealing observations of another prominent philosopher of National Socialism, A. Bäumler? Concerning the Grail he wrote:

The myth of blood is not a *mythology* among other mythologies; it does not put forth a *new* religion alongside older religions. It has for substance the mysterious subsoil of the myth-principle itself. All mythologies proceed from its structuring principle; the knowledge of this principle is not in turn a mythology, rather *it is the myth itself*, it is life contemplated with veneration. The development of its hidden reality is the turning-point of our time.

In the light of such explanations, we can get to the very heart of the neo-Gnosticism or, if one prefers, to the Manichaeism of the Nazi leaders and intellectuals whose entire outlook was based on a racist Gnosis. Infusing all of these myths into the thought of the twentieth century was to be the great preoccupation of the Nazis.

Almost all those authors who have written on National Socialism have more or less sensed the meaning of these aspirations, but they have not expressed them in plain terms. Thus, René Alleau, a specialist of the esoteric, in his last work *Hitler and the Secret Societies* (*Hitler et les sociétés secrètes*), uses the terms "neo-Manicheism" and "racist Gnosis" without pushing his analysis further.

What we are dealing with is a modern, self-revealing

Manichaeism, although one adapted to the style of the Nazi organizations. Indeed, in the Hitlerian cosmology we find the ternary classification characteristic of Gnostic groups: the "pure ones," the initiates, and the masses (one thinks immediately of the Cathari). At the top is the lordly caste, next are the members of the Party, at the bottom are the great anonymous masses. The founding of an order which would be at once military and doctrinaire (much like the Templars of the Middle Ages) was the abiding preoccupation of Hitler before 1939. The SS would be cast in the mold of that Black Order (the color of the "pure ones" and of the new "Cathars"): "Here is the first stage of heroic youth. It is out of this that will come the second stage, that of free man, of man who is both compass and focus of the world, of man-creator, of man-god." (Here once more, the tri-level Gnostic hierarchism.)

This new Gnosis,<sup>14</sup> through the Aryan's *Knowledge* concerning the beginnings, was in opposition to the Christian faith and to the nascent faith of the Marxists. As a fervent admirer of Wagner, whom he placed in the first rank of the German philosophers (in Chapter 7 we shall return to the great composer and his influence on Hitler), the Führer saw in the giant of Bayreuth, with his mystical exaltation of the Grail in *Parsifal* and in *Lohengrin*, the herald of the National Socialist ideology.

The emblem chosen by Hitler, the swastika, or gamma cross, takes on an esoteric meaning in this same mythology. The founder of the National Socialist Party wanted through this universal symbol to link up with all the religions and magics based on symbolism. In much the same way, the knightly orders, such as the Templars, were in their origins initiatory societies, their heraldic devices being chosen by leaders who were versed in the occult. By reestablishing this practice, Hitler continued a tradition long hallowed by the Thule Society.

The Grail—our chief concern—through its meaning, bears



a close relationship to the swastika. *Montsalvat*, the mountain of the Grail, can be assimilated with the *Paradeshâ* of Sanskrit, meaning "Supreme Region" (it still has this meaning in Persia), or "Spiritual Center" *par excellence*. Those familiar with the writings of René Guénon will have no trouble in seeing the relationship; it is clear that the Polar Mountain, mentioned (although under different names) in almost all the early cultures, is the legendary Hyperborea. Guénon has no doubts whatsoever on this subject, his thoughts concerning the Grail itself notwithstanding, since, as he correctly notes: ". . . we are always dealing with a region which, like the earthly Paradise, has become inaccessible to ordinary mortals, and which is situated beyond the reach of all of the cataclysms which threw the human world into utter confusion at the end of certain recurrent cycles" (René Guénon, *King of the World*).

Now the new religion finally could be assembled: the blood myth of the esoteric tradition, the voices of the innumerable prophets, the swastika as a cognitive sign, all of the elements bathed in the liturgical music of Wagner. Louis Bertrand, a French academician converted to the new "religion" (he once gave the Hitler salute under the cupola of the Academy during a convocation of that august body), has left us in his book dedicated to his god Adolf Hitler a description of one of those religious spectacles of the Third Reich at Nuremburg:

In the center of this giant esplanade entirely filled with troops under arms, one sees an avenue as broad as a river bed, which seems to extend to the very horizon. . . . Suddenly, from nowhere, a Wagnerian orchestra fills the air with triumphant sounds; it is the March of the *Nibelungen*. . . . And then from the far end of the field, at the very end of the avenue leading to the Führer's tribune, a purple swath rises up like that which heralds the morning sun: It is the twenty thousand standards which begin to move. To the pulsations of the triumphant music, the wave crests, overflows, unfurls itself in a vast red carpet, then, as

one unit, suddenly ceases to move. Then in a single movement, the twenty thousand banners are raised, great crimson flowers, and dip in one single salute before the tiny silhouette in a brown shirt, hardly discernible at the top of his tribune, who is the master of the Third Germany. . . . And I ask myself: What sovereign, what national hero has ever been acclaimed, adulated, adored, and worshipped as has this man, this little man in a brown shirt, who, followed by his cortege, like a monarch, seems nonetheless to have about him so much of the workingman. This is something altogether different from mere popularity, *this is religion*. Hitler, in the eyes of his admirers, is a prophet, he partakes of the divine.<sup>15</sup>

As for the Tablets of the Law, Hitler envied the Jewish people for them—that people who could remain faithful to a discipline from time immemorial. Small wonder, then, his rage whenever he spoke of Moses and the Hebrews, who for centuries and in spite of all persecution kept intact the Judaic tradition and the religion of their fathers. What a victory, in the eyes of the entire world, the possession of the Grail by Adolf Hitler and what a vengeance at the same time on the eternal enemy! He alone would then appear as the Führer, the Messiah of the eternal religion, the theocratic head of a new Europe with Germany as its center and principal beneficiary of Absolute Knowledge (since the white race would renew its eternal becoming).

Hitler had identified with his own destiny the Germanic legend which, from Charlemagne to Frederick Barbarossa, fired the German imagination. We refer to the legend of the emperor asleep in a grotto in Thuringia, who will one day awaken to proclaim the reign of the Thousand-Year Reich over all Europe and the supremacy of Germany over all the other peoples, in accordance with God's will (*Gott mit uns* = God is with us).

But Hitler was too well versed in things esoteric to forget that the legend of the sleeping emperor is based on the Germanic transposition of the Grail myth as exploited by



Wolfram von Eschenbach at the end of the twelfth century. It was probably at the time of the coronation of Henry VI (son of Frederick I Barbarossa) in 1190 at Mainz that Guyot de Provence (Cathar troubadour and a Templar as well) met the German troubadour von Eschenbach, the latter making over the Occitan *Perceval* into the German *Parzival*, which would one day be magnified a thousand times by Richard Wagner.

We have heard over and over again the same old stories about Adolf Hitler "the house painter, the lower-middle-class nationalist, the misfit snatched out of the gutter!" In much the same way, the Thule Society has been pictured in every fashion to explain the phenomenal rise of Hitler. Such simplistic views ignore a large part of German history, for how can one find a plausible explanation for such a phenomenon: By what sorcery could a man, starting with nothing, in the space of a mere ten years totally vanquish seemingly insurmountable obstacles blocking his ascent to power, and how could such a man capture the confidence of millions of people: the unemployed, the workers, the middle class, the intellectuals? Why did the Great Depression of 1929 not profit the German Communist Party (which attracted millions of voters, whereas the Nazi Party had only a few thousand adherents)? There must be seen in the personal success of Hitler a visible "link" through which was established a sort of mystical communication between the *Volk* ("Community of the same blood") and its Führer, through whom were revived the ancient German myths, stirring the collective subconscious of that people. From time immemorial the Germanic peoples have remained aware of the destruction of their old deities; the *Twilight of the Gods* of Wagner echoed in the *Twilight of the Idols* of Nietzsche. It was to Germany and, to be more specific, to Bavaria that the Grail legend was carried to be transmitted down through the centuries to the Illuminated Ones of Bavaria. The solar cult transmitted to the Cathari by the

Manichaeans, taken up by the Rosicrucians and the Illuminated Ones, was to crop up finally in the form of the swastika of the Third Reich.

In order to bring incontrovertible proof to their thesis, the Nazi leaders realized that they would have to retrace the entire course of Western history, and the Germans of 1933 were not so ill-informed as to be unaware that the Grail legend came from that Cathar *Midi* which so fascinated them. The choice of Otto Rahn for this quest underscores the Nazis' determination to arm themselves with the best possible guarantees of authenticity, since Rahn brought to the task not only a vast knowledge of the *Midi* (he spoke fluent Provençal) and a perfect command of the French language, but also the gifts of a speleologist and the physical stamina of a disciplined sportsman.<sup>16</sup> Before embarking on what one might call the Ninth Crusade, Rahn had made an intensive study of the history and doctrines of the Cathari, in which, if we may borrow the title of a work of the famous Languedoc writer Maurice Magre, he hoped to discover the "key to things concealed."

#### THE CATHAR PHENOMENON

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. . . . I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not abide in darkness.

(JOHN 12:36a, 46)

The Cathar phenomenon appears in the West around the tenth century, at a time when heretics were being hunted throughout Europe. Most often they are called Manichaeans, the term "Cathar" (meaning "pure") appearing only somewhat later. Speaking of the Rhenish Cathari, Eckbert, rector of Cologne Cathedral, informs us that they were accustomed to celebrating a feast in honor of Mani. Roger, Bishop of Chalon, wrote to the Bishop of Liège, advising him that the Cathari of his diocese claimed that by the lay-



ing on of hands they received the Holy Spirit, who was none other than Mani himself.

In 1017, Cathars are found in Orléans. They are burned alive after a verdict rendered by a council of bishops. In 1022, the same thing happens in Toulouse. In 1030, in the Asti region of Italy, a colony of heretics, who are already called Cathari, is discovered and all its members massacred. Yet, despite the pyres, the movement continues its phenomenal growth, and by the twelfth century, it is found further to the north, in Soissons, Liège, and Reims, and even along the Rhine, in Cologne and in Bonn, where some of the heretics are burned at the stake. Northern Italy, through which Bulgarian travelers often passed, was one of the areas most caught up in the heresy, with Milan long identified as a militant center of the Cathars. Pope Innocent III, reacting with uncommon brutality, succeeded only with great difficulty in containing the mounting tide.

But it was in southern Aquitaine, in the Languedocian and Provençal lands of the Counts of Toulouse that Catharism was destined to have its greatest successes. Within the space of a relatively few years, from the end of the twelfth to the first part of the thirteenth century, neo-Manichaeism spread like wildfire, gaining civic freedom among the Visigothic domains, from the Garonne to the Mediterranean. It seemed likely that Albigensianism<sup>17</sup> would soon triumph over Catholicism.

We naturally ask ourselves what were these beliefs which won the ecstatic adherence of both the masses and the highest nobility? In the southern province of Languedoc, Catharism is the point of convergence of two forces. The first has Catharism proceed from Manichaeism, a religion which preaches the opposition of two forces of equal strength in this world, light and darkness, or good and evil, spirit and matter. Manichaeism proceeds in the main from the cult of the Essenes,<sup>18</sup> from which Christ was descended through his maternal side. The Essenes are considered to be the "bridge" and common ground between the Platon-

ists, or Pythagoreans, on the one hand and Buddhism on the other.

What, then, was the second reason for the attraction of Catharism in Languedoc? While we cannot subscribe to Maurice Magre's hypothesis that the main spiritual source of the Albigensians is Buddhist initiation,<sup>19</sup> it should be noted that the Essenes, like the Buddhists, believed in the principle of dualism in the world. They had three orders of believers, with three corresponding degrees of initiation. They practiced the rite of the sacred bath, as did the Brahmins and the Buddhists. According to the historian Flavius Josephus,<sup>20</sup> they condemned bloody sacrifices, they abstained from meat and from wine, and they lived a moral life beyond reproach. It was through the Essenes that the current Indo-Persian ideas came into Christianity. Jesus himself, in receiving baptism from the hands of John, was identifying himself with the Essenian sect in which baptism was an obligatory rite.

Moreover, the Garonne region is an old Druidic territory. The Druids, men of unrivaled wisdom, in spite of what some critics have said, had a highly developed philosophy. They believed in the migration of souls and in reincarnation. It was onto this pagan culture that the Arian heresy<sup>21</sup> grafted itself during the seventh century, a heresy to which the Visigoth kings were converted. The later Counts of Toulouse, of old Germanic lineage, were the direct descendants of these same families. There is nothing astonishing, then, in the fact that Catharism found, in this old Roman province, a privileged sanctuary where it could flourish.

From all that we know, it is certain that the Cathar doctrine is more than a heresy. At many points it separates altogether from traditional Christianity and rejects all the dogma of the Catholic Church:

Can we call God a sick mind

Who afflicted with a raging fever creates a World

Which He then, in the throes of this same fever, proceeds to destroy?



Is the Earth's destiny nothing but one of fever and chill?  
 Is it merely an offspring of some gods, to whom this world  
 Has been bequeathed, like a multicolored toy,  
 And who, according as his fancy takes him, plays with it, or tears  
 it apart,  
 Capable only of stammering out his wishes? <sup>22</sup>

The Gnostic inspiration, which attributes to man three natures—body, soul, and spirit (the body being the abode of the soul, and the soul the abode of the spirit)—was taken up by the Albigensians. Vis-à-vis Rome, the Cathars continued and broadened the Manichaean tradition, rejecting the sacraments, the cross (symbol of death), and Church ritual. At the same time, they have nothing but contempt for the Old Testament (the work of the Jews), and claim that Jesus was only pure spirit. We are familiar with the heresy mostly through the commentaries of its detractors (since all Cathar writings were burned) <sup>23</sup> who give us an incomplete picture of it. We can, however, still form some idea of its fundamental principles.

Its cornerstone is the principle of dualism, if we take as a sort of reference manual the Gospel of John, which was considered to be the only authentic one, because it underscores the eternal opposition between two principles, good and evil. Thus, in this world there is an everlasting conflict between matter, which is of the Devil, and the spirit, which is of God. The Albigensians attributed to Lucifer, the fallen angel and the Prince of this World, the possession of this earthly realm. That is why, at the end of time, the material world will be destroyed, as it is announced in the Apocalypse of Saint John, <sup>24</sup> and the reign of the Holy Spirit or of the cosmic Christ, the Paraclet, will begin. The Cathar *initium* is to be seen in Pythagoras, who believed in metempsychosis, or the reincarnation of the souls of the impure in new human bodies, in animals, and even in vegetal species.

We have already noted that the Cathari rejected Cath-

olic Church dogma—namely, the Holy Eucharist and the remission of sins—and those sacraments which they judged sacrilegious: baptism, communion, marriage. <sup>25</sup> Opposed to the material world because of its impurity, they were opposed to marriage for the initiate, since this institution increases the (material) bodies at the cost of continence. “An aversion for the ‘perverse Creation’ leads the dualists to forbid the eating of meat dishes, God having damned the earth. Since it is a product of lewdness and of the ‘unspeakably foul’ insemination, meat invites concupiscence.” <sup>26</sup>

This belief has as its corollary the belief that the soul, to attain Perfection, must be cleansed of material defilement and carnal exposure. Therefore, the ideal is chastity, which leads to salvation. However, because such a doctrine implies a most severe discipline, the masses were not required to follow it to the letter. Asceticism, however, was expected of the “Perfects” (*Perfecti*), a small elite of the priesthood, who alone were able to receive the illumination of the Absolute Knowledge. They were to kill no animal, respecting Nature in all of her aspects. As Otto Rahn describes in *The Crusade Against the Grail*, the *Perfecti* were robed in black, “a Persian tiara on their heads, [and] they resembled the Brahmans or the acolytes of Zoroaster. When they finished their ceremonies, they drew forth a leather scroll, worn on the chest, on which was written the Gospel according to Saint John, and read therefrom out loud.”

The *Perfecti* abstained from meat, eggs, and dairy products (all products of animal origin), maintaining instead a purely vegetarian diet. Sworn to total chastity, they shunned all intimate relations.

Their rites were extremely simple (thereby condemning the Church with its pomp and pageantry) and devoid of superstition, consisting principally of community prayers, chants, and sermons based on the books of Mani and the Gnostics.

The Cathars had no special place for their religious cere-



monies—nature offering them woods and fields; the feudal lords, their castles; and the townsfolk, their houses. It has been claimed that the *Perfecti* wanted to destroy the family, but this is not true since they approved of civil marriage for ordinary believers.

According to Fernand Niel, the Albigensians practiced a form of public confession which they called “Apparellamentum,” but their principal rite was the well-known Consolamentum.<sup>27</sup> The latter was administered both to the believer aspiring to enter the community of the Perfects and to the dying who wished to die worthily. The ceremony consisted simply in a Perfect laying his hands on the head of the person to be consoled and pronouncing certain words which unfortunately have not come down to us. We can suppose that behind this ceremony was a secret, inherited from the Gnostics and the first Christians, which was intended to transmit an immense, vivifying force. The Perfects could obtain this force through the “baptism of the spirit,” symbolized in the sign of purity conferred on the dying. This invisible help made it possible to escape from the cycle of rebirth and opened the way to the kingdom of the spirit. The Consolamentum was but a visible symbol. Hidden behind it was the vital force of the soul by means of which the latter could go through, resplendent, the narrow strait of death, escape darkness, and integrate itself with light.

The Cathari had efficacious rites for administering to the dying which have been lost forever to us. Unafraid of death, it sometimes happened that certain Perfects chose to die according to the rite of the Endura: “Their doctrine, as did that of the Druids,” notes Otto Rahn, “permitted, suicide. However, it stipulated that one takes one’s own life not because he was tired of living, nor out of fear, nor because of pain, but in a state of perfect detachment from the material world.” And Rahn notes that the Endura was always accomplished by two Cathari together: “This brother with whom the Cathar had shared the most perfect friendship

and years of striving together mightily for ideal spiritual life looked forward to sharing again with him in the life to come, the true life, the beauty already glimpsed of the great beyond and of the divine laws which govern the planets.”<sup>28</sup>

To end their days, they chose among five kinds of death: suicide by poison, starvation, opening their veins, jumping from a precipice, or plunging into freezing water after a steam bath (an action which brings on fatal pulmonary congestion). Certain indications also suggest that the Albigensians sometimes chose to die together as a group. In a crypt in the Montagne noire (Black Mountain), not far from Carcassonne, have been found skeletons dating from the period which concerns us. They were lying in a circle, their heads at the center, their feet at the circumference, like spokes of a perfect wheel. “Those who thus lay down together to die in secret, forming with their bodies the geometric figure of a wheel, accomplished this unusual rite only because such a practice was of an extreme importance, offering a sublime recompense.”<sup>29</sup> Maurice Magre believes that this mode of dying, which was already known in Brittany in the island of Tiviec more than 5,000 years ago, was common to those peoples descended from the ancient Atlantans.

However, the rite of Endura did not always lead to death. Most often it took the form of a prolonged fast of purification, lasting two months, interrupted by short periods during which participants took bread and water. It was especially during times of persecution that the Cathari, after having received the Consolamentum, decided to take their own lives.

While we are poorly informed about the ceremonies of their religion, excavations have uncovered certain symbolic objects used by the Albigensians that have enabled us to reconstruct some of their beliefs previously unknown. Some people immediately stated that young Rahn, in order to confirm his hypotheses, had himself drawn certain graffiti found



in the grottoes of the Sabarthez, notably a Cathar dove. The fact of the matter is that a sculpted dove has been found at Montségur itself and in one of the grottoes of the Orno-lac. The dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, of the divine light come down among men, which proves clearly that Catharism is a religion of light and not one of magic. The same is true of the recent discoveries of solar crosses, Celtic crosses, and pentagonal-shaped objects found on the Pog and in certain grottoes. All of these symbols have to do with the cult which the Albigensians observed for the sun, the heavenly body emanating from Divine Creation. The studies of Fernand Niel, showing that the castle of Montségur was a sun temple (a fact we have already noted), have confirmed the Manichaeic-Zoroastrian link with Albigensianism. Likewise, the people of the Midi made regular use of the gamma cross and of the swastika well into the nineteenth century, thus linking up with the great traditions of universal symbolism.

The Cathars led exemplary lives. Before the time of the persecutions, they traveled the length and the breadth of the Midi, teaching the masses, preaching a gospel of purification and the simple life, and stigmatizing the moral corruption of the Catholic clergy (who practiced, among other offenses, the sins of nicolaism and simony).<sup>30</sup> The people were attracted to these men dressed in black who lived like saints, and they abandoned the corrupt priests. The nobility, drawn by the aristocratic ideal of the heresy, also adhered to the new faith. The Catholic Church was growing corrupt and losing its spiritual power, as it became more and more removed from the lives and needs of the people. By contrast, the Cathars shared the sufferings of the common people, practicing medicine, taking care of the sick, and bringing the "Good Word."

Many of the Albigensians were craftsmen, particularly skilled in weaving wool, and these Perfects, as they bent over their looms, wondered if "It was not the earth's spirit

which in truth was weaving, at the noisy loom of Time, the living robe of the Almighty."<sup>31</sup> The history of the Albigensian heresy is long and interesting. It is not, however, our intention to write about it here nor, for that matter, to rewrite it; what is important about this religious revolt is the reasons behind it.

In the thirteenth century in Languedoc and Provence, there occurred, with menacing symptoms, one of these uprisings of the human spirit which will renew themselves from century to century until the preaching of Luther. Philosophism and republicanism, whether allied together in a common cause or alone, were attacking the sovereign authority of Rome and the established order. An immense religious movement made its appearance at two points simultaneously: Waldensian rationalism appeared in the Alps, and German mysticism appeared along the Rhine and in the Low Countries, where the civil corporations were in revolt against their bishops and the clergy. The followers of Pierre de Burys wanted to reestablish the early Church in its purity and its poverty by returning to the simplicity of the Gospel of St. John. Repressed momentarily, they regrouped at Lyons about 1170 with the Waldensians.

In the north toward the end of the twelfth century, Amaury de Bue, who came from the area of Chartres, and his disciple David de Denain began to preach a type of mysticism based on the writings of Scot Erigena, which was an adulterated version of Cathar doctrine. They believed that the reign of the Holy Spirit was about to begin, one in which the earlier laws would cease to apply, with the only religion remaining being the pure adoration of the soul.

In Italy, Dante's ideal was to see the German emperor Henry of Luxemburg overthrow the pope and restore a purified Christianity freed from priestly domination through which he (Dante) would have regenerated himself. Dante was the supreme pontiff of the Cathar sect, and his *Divine*



*Comedy* was written with the express purpose of exalting his faith in the Cathar religion and of heaping abuse on the Papacy for having unleashed the Albigensian persecution.

Faced with a revolt of such proportions, the Catholic Church had finally become aroused; on all sides schisms and heresies spread and became ever more numerous, especially the Cathar doctrine which enticed away from the Catholic faith its best servants, both among the clergy and the laity. As it would happen, the leaders of the Cathar heresy in Aquitaine, as in Italy, came for the most part from noble families<sup>32</sup> or the upper middle class.

Let us consider first of all the kings who were Cathars. On the Spanish side there was the House of Aragon whose power extended over Catalonia, the southern portion of Provence, the counties of Urgel and of Cerdagne, the province of Roussillon, and Aragon. On the other side of the Pyrenees reigned the powerful Counts of Toulouse, descendants of the Visigoth kings. Raymond V, who died in 1194, had not taken part in the first Crusades, preferring to develop the *Gay Saber* (Joyful Science [T.N.]) of the troubadours, courtly love, and a remarkable diplomacy. Although he had remained aloof from Catharism, this was not to be true of his son Raymond VI.

Meanwhile, in the year 1163, at the Council of Tours, Pope Alexander II, at the insistence of the prelates of the north of France, issued a decree condemning the steady progression of the Cathar heresy in the southern provinces. At the Third Lateran Council held in 1179 by Alexander III, the Count of Toulouse, the Count of Foix, the Viscount of Béziers, and the majority of the barons of the old Roman lands in the Midi were excommunicated. The threat to the Cathars and those shielding them was becoming clear. This was the signal for the first reprisal against the Albigensians. For the first time but not, alas, the last, the Church was to use this means of brutal conquest against Christians. . . . The war against the Albigensians, Maurice Magre has de-

clared, was the greatest single turning point in the religious history of mankind.

Raymond VI, who had just been enthroned at Toulouse, made no secret of his sympathies for his Cathar subjects and was not at all fearful of showing his aversion for Rome. It was at the famous meeting at Pamiers in 1207 that in the course of public debates the papal legates and the Perfects of Catharism confronted each other. This encounter gave ample proof to the Albigensian heretics that the Church was ready to use any means necessary to bring an end to their religious movement.

Before the armies of Simon de Montfort invade and destroy the Aquitanian civilization, let us have a final look at the society in these years. The political and social milieu of Languedoc was permeated with a spirit of tolerance unknown in the north. Society had not split itself into closed castes; a bourgeois could become a noble, and a villein could become a bourgeois. The cities of the south had more inhabitants and were richer. Let us not forget that Toulouse was, in terms of its importance, the third city of Europe, after Venice and Rome—Toulouse with its marvelous basilica of Saint-Sernin, the pink city of gardens and of belltowers. In the numerous large towns, municipal magistrates and consuls elected by the inhabitants represented the tradition of liberty inherited from antiquity. The bustling commercial activity encouraged exchanges of viewpoints on matters of religious belief.

But the most impressive aspect of the Aquitanian civilization remains the extraordinary literary activity of the troubadours, which is astonishing in terms of its output. Indeed, one counts almost five hundred known troubadours (the Counts of Foix and of Toulouse were at that time writing verse, while the King of France barely knew how to sign his name), including ordinary knights, churchmen, and the sons of middle-class families.<sup>33</sup>

The main theme of their literature was courtly love, symbolized by the word *paratge* (pride in one's noble birth



[T.N.]), which represents the virtues of honor, loyalty, and rectitude, which were applicable not only in the love shown one's lady, but also in one's outlook on matters of politics and religion. The troubadour ideal tends toward the absolute and finds its expression in the analysis of sentiments through a love at once platonic and divorced from the flesh. The poet-singers were thoroughly imbued with Cathar mysticism, which aspires to divine love, and in time of persecution, they will be the most devoted servants of the Albigensian cause. The *leys d'amor* (Code of Love [T.N.]) which they had drawn up contained not fewer than thirty-one commandments.

And, what is most unusual, they set forth as the guiding principle that the *Minne* (German for courtly love) excluded altogether the idea of physical love or of marriage. *Minne* represented the union of souls and of hearts; and marriage, the union of bodies. Marriage spells the death of *Minne* and of poetry. That love which is merely passion fades quickly with sensual pleasure. Whoever has true *Minne* in his heart desires not the body of his beloved; he only yearns for her heart; true *Minne* is pure and incorporeal. *Minne* is not love; Eros is not sex.<sup>34</sup>

In my castle calm and deserted,  
Covered with mid-winter's snow,  
I dreamt in my long delirium  
Of Spring with (her) smile divine.  
An ancient collection of songs of love  
Told me how he sighs,  
Walther, the troubadour of old  
Who plucked the strings of my heart and of my lyre.<sup>35</sup>

About this time clouds were gathering in the skies of Aquitaine. In 1207, the papal legate Pierre de Castelnau, who had been seeking in vain to stir up the lords of the south against the Albigensians, excommunicated the Count of Toulouse, Raymond VI. Certain that danger was imminent, the Cathars decided to choose a sure refuge to which they could retreat in case of attack. By this time the castles of Quéribus, Puylaurens, and Peyrepertuse had gone over

to them. But it was Montségur, in the heart of the Ariège Pyrenees, which the heretics had designated as their sacred site. With this in mind they asked Esclarmonde de Foix and Montségur's governor, Ramon de Perelha, both fervent Albigensians, to rebuild the castle of Montségur, then in ruins, and this was done.

"So it was that Montségur, the citadel protecting the sacred Mount Tabor, the Parnassus of Romany, was fortified and garrisoned. Like an ark, it would be able during yet a half century, to withstand the tide of blood and crimes about to break over Romany and to engulf its culture and its civilization."<sup>36</sup>

For it is indeed a war of secession which we are about to witness. The south rises as one against the armies of the north, which consist of 20,000 knights and 200,000 foot soldiers drawn from every province north of the Loire, who rendezvous at Lyons and come down through the Rhone Valley on June 24, 1209. Otto Rahn has left us a vivid description of these barbarians from the north, whose purpose was to finish the conquest of the southern provinces begun seven centuries earlier by Clovis:

Out in front rides the moody, irreconcilable Abbot of Citeaux, the "head of the Christian forces against the Albigensian heretics." Like a horseman of the Apocalypse, he gallops, his robe blowing in the wind, through the land which does not adore his own God. Behind him is the army of archbishops, bishops, abbots, priests, and monks. Riding with the princes of the Church are the lay princes in their armor, where shines steel, silver, and gold. Then come the maurauding bands of knights with their German mercenaries who have already been given a free hand: Robert-the-Penniless, Boozier, God knows their names. Then the townsmen and peasants, and finally, by the thousands, the riffraff of Europe: the hangers-on, vagrants, and in the four-wheeled bawdy houses, the trollops of all the countries imaginable.<sup>37</sup>

It is during the sack of Béziers, on July 21, in which the entire population (20,000 people) is massacred, heretics and Catholics alike, in the Church of the Madeleine, that



the papal legate will cry out: "Kill them all, God will recognize his own!" Then it is the turn of Carcassonne, where the perfidious Arnaud-Amaury seizes the Viscount Trencavel and his best knights, drawing them out of the castle under the pretext of wanting to hold negotiations.

In 1220, the little town of Lavaur sees the "crusaders" repeat their crimes: All of the inhabitants, without regard for their different beliefs, age, or sex, are put to the sword; the castle's lady, Géralda, is thrown alive into a well that is then filled with stones. It is in terrible moments such as these that the Cathars show what their courage and faith is made of. At Goslar they choose to be hanged rather than butcher a chicken. At Minerve in the region of Hérault, where they surrender to Simon de Montfort after a desperate resistance, 150 heretics throw themselves into the flames, singing songs of praise. There, where all human genius seemed to have been gathered, lay more than a million dead, more than the toll of the repression of all of the other heresies combined.

The principal reason behind the awesome massacre of the Albigensians, the hidden cause but the true one, was that the secret of the Cathar sanctuaries, the ancient teaching of the mysteries so jealously guarded in all of the temples of the world by all of the esoteric brotherhoods, had been revealed. It had been revealed, and it was now plain for all to see and to know that what had happened had never before had its parallel in human history.

However, the walls of Catharism's temple, Montségur, still stood, as a symbol defying Catholicism. Earlier, in 1209, Guy de Montfort had given up the difficult siege of this mountain. The murder of the Dominican inquisitors of Avignonet would renew the siege and finally bring about the fall of the fortress. The hemming in of the Pog started in the spring of 1243, but six months later the siege had made little progress. The Cathars, taking advantage of the widespread sympathy for their cause throughout the region and

doubtless even within the royal army, maintained communications with the outside. Encouraging messages arrived from Italy, from the Holy Roman Empire, and even from Constantinople. The Cathar bishop Bertrand d'En-Marti encouraged the besieged. Finally, the Seneschal of Carcassonne, Hugues des Arcis, who was in charge of the "crusade," managed to break the citadel's resistance through an act of treachery. A guide who knew a secret road led an armed group to the flat ledge on which the castle stands, near the summit. One chronicle relates that when day broke the volunteers who had made the climb<sup>38</sup> recoiled in horror on seeing the unbelievable path they had traversed during the night. From this moment the surrender of the fortress was only a question of time. The first of March, 1244, a truce was signed, and on March 16, the citadel surrendered. Two hundred Cathars, among them fifty Perfects, having refused to abjure their beliefs, chose to be burned at the stake set up in a field, which, by its name, *le champ des crémati* ("Field of the Burned"), recalls the sacrifice of the "heretics." The poem of Henri Sabarthez witnesses this martyrdom and compels us to remember how it was:

Montségur is about to die; the cry of the dying breaks  
Over the massacre and shatters the ethers.  
Its gutted parapets are spangled with scarlet,  
And in its purpure, rolls its crown of iron. . . .

Borne by their faith, they enter the fiery coals;  
Two hundred martyrs burn and die singing.  
Far away the flashes of light strike the gleaming scepters  
Of Pope and Kings.

Montségur is about to die. Coming down from its summit,  
Like kings descending Mount Tabor, are  
Perelha, d'en-Marti, sublime patriarchs,  
And the immortal cortege moving straight toward death.



Their real resting place is up there, raised up near the heavens,  
Between the broken walls of the tragic castellum  
Whose wounded stones are the epic crown  
Fashioned by the gods.

The silent genies keep their lonely vigil about it  
And alone, reverentially, in the crimson morn  
The Pyrenean eagle who gazes at the sun,  
Brushes the escarpments lightly with his wing.

Passerby, stop when night descends,  
And when the white moon like a celestial fruit  
Appears about the enchanted castle,  
Look upon Monségur standing in the light.

It was the august Temple, in the past unrivaled,  
Where once blazed the cult of the Sun  
And where the Holy Grail shone resplendently in its diadem:  
Immortal glimmer in the distant past.

And when it was the Knight of the Perfects,  
Braving popes and kings, it is the last to fall.  
Mighty among the mightiest of Man's history,  
Ten centuries of epic verse render praise to its spirit.

As for the treasure of the heretics, Pierre-Roger de Mirepoix received permission to keep it. It consisted of precious objects as well as of gold and silver coin. But what happened to the real treasure of the Cathari, the spiritual treasure, the Grail? The documents of the Inquisition confirm that the night preceding the capitulation of Montségur, four Albigensians let themselves down on ropes along the vertiginous side of the mountain (Aicart, Poitevin, Hugh, and Alfaro) and managed to make good their escape into the surrounding mountains, carrying off with them the sacred treasure. Tradition has it that when the Grail had been saved, a flame appeared on the neighboring mountain of Biaorta, announcing to the Cathari of Montségur that they could now lie in peace. The Grail stone, or sacred book, was

doubtless hidden in one of the innumerable grottoes of the Sabarthez, which sheds light on the legend which Otto Rahn heard from an old shepherd:

During the time when the walls of Montségur were still standing, the Cathars kept the Holy Grail there. Montségur was in danger, the armies of Lucifer had besieged it. They wanted the Grail, to restore it to their Prince's diadem from which it had fallen during the fall of the angels. Then, at the most critical moment, there came down from heaven a white dove which, with its beak, split Tabor in two. Esclarmonde, who was keeper of the Grail, threw the sacred jewel into the depths of the mountain. The mountain closed up again, and in this manner was the Grail saved. When the devils entered the fortress, they were too late. Enraged, they put to death by fire all of the Pures, not far from the rock on which the castle stands, in the *champ des cré mats*, the Field of the Stake. . . . All of the Pures perished on the pyre, except Esclarmonde de Foix. When she knew the Grail to be safe, she climbed to the summit of Mount Tabor, changed into a white dove, and flew off toward the mountains of Asia. Esclarmonde is not dead. Even now she lives over there, in the earthly Paradise. (*Crusade Against the Grail*)



## 2

# The Grail: Neo-Pagan Relic

### THE BOOK OF THE KEY

And this stone was also called the Grail  
(Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*)

*The Crusade Against the Grail* was neither intended nor able to treat in depth its subject (for good reasons). The main importance of the book is that it brought together historical elements which until then were believed to be unrelated. The extensive learning of Otto Rahn enabled him to effect this synthesis of ideas. Moreover (although his audience of 1933 could not know it), the writer could count on the support of the German government and on the related work of several scholars who came along to help him in his quest for what we might call the "new style" Grail.

It is to his credit, where historical fact is concerned, that Rahn followed Péladan when the latter assumes that there were secret relations between Catharism and the Templars. We concur in this opinion, since all research undertaken on the matter has uncovered points of contact between these two "heresies," in the ecclesiastical meaning of the term.

It would appear that Rahn is right in what he says concerning the Templars who had been able to escape the massacre:

Perhaps they in their turn found refuge in the Pyrenean caverns. There is much to suggest that the white mantle of the Templars, with its striking red, eight-pointed cross, became lost along with the black vestments and the yellow crosses of the Cathars in the mysterious grottoes of the Sabarthez.<sup>1</sup>

Further on he notes:

When the Revolution in Paris was pushing its prey down the Rue Saint-Antoine toward the Louvre and Notre-Dame, it is said that a man dressed in a long black robe went after the priests. Each time that his saber struck one of them, he would shout: "Here's something for the Albigeois, and here is something for the Templars."<sup>2</sup>

It is also to the credit of Rahn that he saw the relationship between the Montsalvat of the Grail romances and the Montségur of the Ariège region, the first name having no other purpose than that of designating the second place. Finally, what really distinguishes Rahn's work is that his explanation does not depend on the myth deliberately perpetuated by the Church concerning the Grail. According to him (and in all probability), the term designated a number of tablets of stone or wood on which was engraved ancient runic writing, as had been noted by Wolfram von Eschenbach:

Guyot, the master of high reknown,  
Found, in *confused pagan writing*,  
The legend which reaches back to the prime source of  
all legends.

This pagan and Aryan treasure came into Europe by way of Persia following the disappearance of the mysterious realm of Thule, land of the Hyperboreans, distant ancestors of the Indo-European peoples. What is particularly inter-



esting to note is the amalgam made by the German troubadour (Eschenbach) of the Grail emerald and of the Grail book: <sup>3</sup>

And this stone,  
It, too, is called the Grail.

This verse may be compared with the following:

On an emerald green achmardi  
She bore the perfection of Paradise: . . .  
It was the object called the Grail.

From this point on, Wolfram develops Guyot's translation:

A pagan (his name was Flegetanis),  
Whose rich learning all praised,  
Chosen from the race of Solomon,  
Issued from the stock of Israel,  
Was first to get on the track of the Grail.

The allusion concerns Solomon's treasure, which presumably included the Grail. As Otto Rahn notes: "At the Battle of Jerez de la Frontera (A.D. 711) which lasted seven days, the Visigoths were crushed by the Arabs. Solomon's treasure (which had belonged to King Alaric) fell at Toledo into the hands of the infidels. Solomon's Table, it is said, was not in the booty taken." <sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, it was at Toledo that, according to Wolfram's poem, Guyot found the Grail.

The rest of the legend concerns the grotto of the Sabarthez, which must have served as a hiding place for this Grail stone. This cachette, this refuge, is described by Eschenbach when Trevrizent (the intermediary), before leading young Parzival into the cavern to initiate him in the mystery of the Grail, gives him a robe to put on:

To a grotto his host led him,  
Where hardly a breath of wind ever came.  
There, was a robe: his host  
Put it on him and then led him  
Into a nearby cell.

Various Spanish legends tell that the Grail, still referred to only as "Solomon's [jewel-]case," was hidden in "the magic grotto of Hercules." In his poem *The Albigensians* (*les Albigeois*), Lenau has taken up again this old Spanish theme of the grotto:

There is, in the forest, a grotto deep and still;  
No ray of light reaches it, no breeze touches it.  
Wild animals, grown old, feeble, fall into it  
To die there undisturbed in the darkness.

It was this very cavern of Hercules that Otto Rahn was on the point of discovering: He believed it was located in the grottoes of Ormolac. Such a cavern would have had to be extremely deep and almost invisible from the outside, since we know from historical sources that the Dominican inquisitors used trained dogs to sniff out heretics after the fall of their last bastion, Montségur.

On entering the largest cavern of the Sabarthez, that of Lombrives, one gets some idea of what a Cathar necropolis may have been like (something which archeologists are still hunting for). In any event, the Grail could have been kept only in the "cathedral" of Lombrives, for it is there that "the tomb of Hercules" is situated. Here is the description of the place as noted by Otto Rahn:

In a time out of mind, in an epoch whose remoteness has been barely touched by modern historical science, it was used as a temple consecrated to the Iberian god Ilhomber, god of the Sun. . . .<sup>5</sup> Between two monoliths, one of which has crumbled, the steep path leads into the gigantic vestibule of the cathedral of Lombrives. . . . Between stalactites of white limestone, between walls of a deep brown color and the brilliant rock crystal, the path leads down into the bowels of the mountain. A hall 260 feet in height served as a cathedral for the heretics.<sup>6</sup>

One can see in this hall a stalagmite named exactly "the tomb of Hercules." We imagine ourselves following Otto Rahn in this most significant speleological and archeological



probe. As he leads us into a third grotto, that of Fontanet, he points out a stalagmite as white as snow which is called "the altar." Now, if we go back to the poem of von Eschenbach, we can only conclude that the latter was exceedingly well informed as to the presence of the Grail at Montségur, since he refers specifically to those same two stalagmites: "the tomb of Hercules" and "the altar":

Eraclius or Hercules,<sup>7</sup>  
Then the Greek Alexander,  
For they are all familiar with  
The stones . . .

And further:

There stood, also, according to the custom of the time,  
The altar. Exposed thereon  
Was this jewelcase.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in summary: the Grail, still called the case or table of Solomon, was seized by Alaric, the king of the Visigoths in the year 410. He then took it from Rome to Carcassonne (this jewel case was part of Solomon's treasure and had been brought from Jerusalem by the Romans). According to Arab tradition Solomon's table was at Carcassonne: It was this object which was hidden in a grotto of the Sabarthez, that very grotto described by von Eschenbach on the strength of information provided by Guyot; that is to say, the grottoes of Lombrives and Fontanet, among other hypotheses. The presence of the Grail in the Pyrenees seems beyond doubt; otherwise, the Nazi regime would not have attached the great importance it did to Rahn's investigations.

One single question remains for the historian hoping to interpret the meaning of the past: Did Otto Rahn indeed find the Grail stone, and if so, what happened to it? We believe that it is possible that Rahn did succeed in tracking

down the Grail to its location in one of the caverns of the Sabarthez. Of course, lacking time and means and being in a place where his presence as a foreigner was bound to be conspicuous, he was not able to make off with it. Doubtless, it was following the occupation of France by German troops that the Grail was removed. But even if we take into account the length of the German occupation of France, the problem still remains. We are therefore going to adduce some facts in support of our hypotheses. We refer to a mysterious mission which took place in 1943 and especially some strange events having to do with the seventh centenary of the fall of Montségur, March 16, 1944. The interdependence of the cumulative evidence tends to confirm that the Grail was indeed carried off to Germany by an SS group acting under Himmler's orders, he being well informed concerning the likely presence of the Grail at Montségur or in the immediately surrounding region. As the grand master of the Black Order, Himmler had a passion for the Germanic Middle Ages; it would not be an exaggeration to say that he was obsessed by it. His favorite heroes were King Arthur (of the Round Table legends), Henry I ("The Fowler"), and Frederick Barbarossa, names which will be mentioned frequently in later chapters because of what they tell us of the esoteric propensities of the masters of the Third Reich. To these names must be added that of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1194-1250), who dreamed of unifying for his own ends Moslem East and Christian West, with the collaboration of the Templars (before the Church found out his purpose and got rid of this powerful enemy). Once more we find here the old idea of an "Imperial Messiah" so dear to Templars, Cathari, and Ghibelines, all united in the same battle under the banner of the Holy Roman Empire and contesting the hegemony of Rome.

Himmler kept in his study the three works of Wolfram von Eschenbach: *Parzival*, *Wilhelmhaml*, and *Titirel*. It



would be superfluous to dwell on the ecstasies into which such readings plunged him, for contrary to what André Brissand states in *Hitler and the Black Order* (*Hitler et l'ordre noir*), the SS leader knew very well where the Grail could be found and was not in the least worried that the quest might prove fruitless: This we see by the mission of Otto Rahn, named shortly thereafter colonel in the SS. The German intellectual, having espoused National Socialism, from this point onward received every favor of the Nazi leaders. His second book, *Lucifer's Court in Europe* (*La cour de Lucifer en Europe*), by order of Himmler, was "required reading" for principal Nazi dignitaries, thereby gaining the status of a Nazi gospel.

As a passionate admirer of Arthurian legend and as an intensely interested observer of Rahn's 1937 expedition to Languedoc, Himmler made elaborate preparations for receiving the Grail with all the honor due it and for assuring it a more noble sanctuary than the miserable cavern of the Sabarthez which had been its refuge for seven centuries. It appears that his choice fell on the castle of Wewelsburg near Paderborn, in Westphalia. This fortress, then in ruins, whose majestic proportions overwhelmed Himmler, was destined to become the new Nazi temple, guarded by the modern knight-monastics, namely, the SS. Thousands of political prisoners worked on the reconstruction of the edifice, whose dining room alone measured thirty meters in length. The Reichsführer of the SS (in imitation of the knights of the Round Table attending the Grail) allowed near him, during meals, only twelve superior officers of the SS.<sup>9</sup> Located under the vast meeting room was the Holy of Holies, with its vaulting ogives, where the sacred Grail was to repose on an altar of black marble struck with the two SS runes in silver. The meditations of the guests at Wewelsburg concerned mystical biology, the ethics of honor, the spiritual myth of blood, and other Gnostic and dualistic themes dear to the Nazi elite. These "retreats" were held in

a room measuring 500 square meters on the same level with the altar of the new religion.

Let us return to the events at Montségur and in the Ariège region between 1943 and 1944. On March 16, 1944, several inhabitants had gathered together on the summit of the Pog of Montségur to commemorate the seven hundredth anniversary of the sacrifice of the Cathari put to death at the stake. Gathered together since dawn, they had prayed for the repose of the Perfects, who had preferred to be burned alive rather than deny their faith. Noon was approaching when a plane (a Fieseler "Stork" bearing German markings) put on a dazzling display for the pilgrims inside the château. Using its skywriting apparatus, the plane traced in the sky a gigantic Celtic cross (one of the Cathar emblems) before disappearing in the direction of Toulouse, while the spectators, realizing the significance of the event, bared their heads. Rosenberg, in all probability, was in the aircraft.<sup>10</sup>

This event proves the intense interest which both Rosenberg, grand master of the esoteric, and Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, had in the history of medieval Aquitaine. This same interest will become apparent again in the mysterious undertaking by the Nazi occupiers from 1943 to 1944 on the Cathar sites of the medieval Counts of Foix. They utilized the precise information gathered some ten years earlier by the confidant of Rosenberg and of the Society of the Seekers of the Grail (Otto Rahn), who must have been thinking, like the troubadours:

Al cap des set cen ans verdegeo el laurel<sup>11</sup>

("At the end of seven hundred years, the laurel will be green once more")

[The French pilgrims of March 16, 1944, gathered together on the Pog for this ceremony, who had asked the German general for permission to make the pilgrimage (Montségur being in a "forbidden zone"), received the re-



ply that it was forbidden to so much as tread upon this "German soil," for the Third Reich had "historic rights" on Montségur. On the summit, once the war was over, the Bayreuth Society would give the *Tetralogy* of Wagner. We have seen that the French pilgrims defied the interdict, and it was because of this that they received the surprise they did.]

### THE MYSTERIOUS MISSION

During the month of June, 1943, a group of German scientists (geologists, historians, ethnologists) came to camp on the Pog of Montségur, protected by the French *milice*.<sup>12</sup> The excavating lasted until November of the same year, but without result. The investigations were to resume again in the spring of 1944.

It is likely that shortly after the March, 1944, events Rosenberg went to Montségur to render an initial act of homage to the Grail, immediately after it had been discovered. The famous runic tablets were found, not in the grottoes of the Sabarthez (where Otto Rahn had been looking), but on the traditional itinerary of the Cathari, near the crest of the La Peyre. Doubtless, no one will ever know the whole truth of the matter. This much, however, can be said: If the SS were regarded as the ultimate depositaries of the old, Aryan Grail (and everything points to it), then it follows that the secret order of the Aryans still survives at the highest level of National Socialism.

A general of the SS was with Admiral Dönitz when the latter announced the following: "The German submarine fleet is proud to have constructed an earthly Paradise, an impregnable fortress for the Führer, somewhere in the world." This secret base, according to various investigators, would be somewhere in Tierra del Fuego, for the Fuegian archipelago is made up of an incalculable number of is-

lands and makes an ideal lair for this type of installation. However, it would be most unlikely that the Grail was carried there after the Nazi defeat—if indeed this undersea base ever did exist.

Investigations concerning the Grail of the Aryans have pointed rather toward the Bavarian Alps, transformed by the Nazis into a last redoubt capable of a protracted resistance. To imagine what this natural fortress might have been like, we have a comparable example in what the Swiss have succeeded in doing in the area of the town of Martigny, where the Upper Rhone Valley is padlocked against any possible invasion. In 1945, Hitler, for reasons unknown, steadfastly refused to regroup in the Alpine redoubt. However, the region of Aussee, in the heart of the Austrian Alps, offered a virtually assault-proof lair.

According to the great "hunter" of Nazis, Simon Wiesenthal, thousands of men began to fall back toward this region during 1945. The head of the Gestapo, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, took refuge in a village chalet; the SD, the RSHA, and the Abwehr<sup>13</sup> brought their secret files there. We can only speculate on what happened to the fabulous treasure of Nazi Germany, a hoard which has never been found and which has been thought to be in any number of places in central Europe.

These stories of hidden treasures, calculated to fire the imagination, have often been mentioned in connection with other items appearing in the papers having to do with the mysterious, secret, Nazi "Centrals" and other organizations, such as the Spider or the Stockholm Internationale, which was accused of plotting the return of Hitler (who had only disappeared in 1945). In this Nazi "mythology," it is extremely difficult to sort truth from fiction.

Still, for the benefit of the incredulous, we should point out that old myths sometimes come back to life with unpredictable power. Consider for example the following news



item appearing in the much-respected *Journal des Débats* of January 22, 1929, which concerns one of these "explosions" linked to the most ancient traditions:

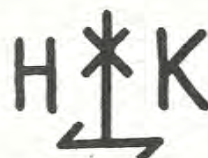
In 1925, a large number of the Cuna Indians rose up, killed the Panamanian police militia living on their lands, and founded the Independent Republic of Thule, whose flag is a swastika on an orange background with a red border. This republic still exists at this time.

If, in 1929, a National Socialist republic existed in Latin America among Indians who were thought to have lost their true identity, was not this phenomenon a reflection of a tradition, common to all ancient civilizations, according to which there once existed a continent with a highly developed way of life (Hyperborea or the White Isle), whose capital was Thule, which disappeared in a catastrophe of cosmic proportions? The question is an important one, for on the answer depends the profound meaning of the Grail: Its very existence depends on the remembrance of this Great Tradition. Runic writing would be the key to solving this problem; the National Socialist philosophers did not fail to make the Grail a message in ancient runic writing which was the final legacy of the boreal kingdom of Thule. We are begging the question for it appears certain that the Cathars (whose modes of thought are sufficiently removed from Nordic themes) were unable to decipher these stone tablets on which was written a "confused, pagan language."<sup>14</sup>

C. W. Freese stated in his *Runen in Germanen Kalender*, 1921:

Runology (that is to say, the study of the origin, development and use of runes) is making steady progress these days. For German and Scandinavian specialists, 'both the Latin and Greek alphabets come from the runes.' Phonetic writings find their origin not among the Phoenicians nor the Orientals, but among the men of the North.

There were also secret runes (the armies of King Gustavus Adolphus made use of them). This category of runes, real symbols, held an important place in the old Germanic cults (paganism based on sun worship). Here are two examples of these runic symbols:



Brunswick (Old House)



Zwickau (St. Mary's Church)

We find traces of runes in regions formerly peopled by Scandinavians (from Russia to America), examples of what geographers would call an "exported runology." Thus, as far back as 1020, the Scandinavian colonies of North America had already taken root, as we know from a most important discovery: the Heavener Stone, which was first thought to be a representative example of Indian writing, was found in 1830 by some Choctaw Indians. The stone was identified as runic only in 1948 by Mrs. Gloria Farley, who turned it over, on September 28, 1959, to the Oklahoma Historical Society, along with a translation.<sup>15</sup>

Among other hypotheses it is possible that the Indians knew of the swastika through the initiation ceremonies of the Vikings. We know that the first conquistadors who noted with stupefaction that the Indians were familiar with the cross brought back legends telling of white men with red hair and of imposing stature.

We believe that the runes predate considerably the Scandinavian expeditions, for the runes are also called *reginn-kunnar*, that is, "born of the gods." It is more likely that the runes replaced signs (the *notae* referred to by Tacitus) already in existence and used in the same way, as a sacred script.



Forbidden by the Church (several thousands of wood engravers were burned in the course of the evangelization of Frisia first by Boniface and later by Charlemagne), the runes managed to escape total destruction, despite all efforts of the Irish monks, who in the same state of mind saw to it that 10,000 Celtic manuscripts of birchbark, which perhaps held vast treasures of wisdom, were burned. In one way or another, the runes managed to survive until the seventeenth century, when they disappeared permanently. But runology, born in the same century, will fortunately keep their meaning alive.

Runes have come down to us in their most important forms: The swastika (but this is a universal symbol) and the double solar "Sieg" have enjoyed a fame all too well-known (the two letters S S stood for the first signs of this alphabet). In France, particularly in Normandy, solar wheels of flaming woven straw usher in the fires of the summer solstice, and the *h*, or starred rune, is used in Denmark to wish a Happy New Year.

It was doubtless that Wolfram von Eschenbach was referring to the runes when he wrote concerning the Grail:

Guyot, the Master of high reknown,  
Found in a confused pagan script  
The legend which reaches back to the prime source  
of (all) legends.

(*Parzival*)

While we are unable today to go back as far as the origin of the first runes, we note this Hyperborean Grail tradition whose most recent adepts were Otto Rahn and the Nazi leaders. The author Rauschning glimpsed the truth behind the spectacular political movement that was Hitlerism:

Every German has one foot in Atlantis, where he seeks a better land and a better patrimony. This ability to split oneself into two personalities, which enables them to live in the real world and at the same time to project themselves into an imaginary world, re-

veals itself most particularly in Hitler and gives us the key to his magic socialism (*Hitler m'a dit*).

The writer Arthur Machen (born in 1863 at Caerleon-On-Usk, a little village which was the seat of King Arthur's court and from whence the knights of the Round Table left on their quest of the Grail) belongs to this same Hyperborean Grail tradition. One need only to reflect on his book *The Great Return* (a 1915 meditation on the Grail) to find all of the notions we have been talking about. Machen was in close rapport with the British movement, the Golden Dawn Society, and its German offshoots, which were to end up as the Thule Society (the synthesis of all of Machen's most cherished hopes).<sup>16</sup>

It is, therefore, an analysis of National Socialist thought by way of the labyrinth of esoteric tradition that we propose to the reader. The central theme being Gnosis, with its most significant thrust represented by the prophet Mani, its evolution necessarily brings us to Catharism, a neo-Gnostic sect of the Middle Ages, and thence to Templarism. Subsequently, Gnosis goes underground, degenerating with the Rosicrucians and the Illuminati of Bavaria, and finally culminates, after many detours, in the mysterious Thule Society.

We decided to write what follows because, as Marcel Ray so well understood in 1939 concerning the confrontation not far off, "It will be a Manichaeian war or, in the words of Scripture, a battle of the gods."



PART TWO  
**THE GREAT TRADITION**



### 3

## The Myth of the Beginnings

#### ATLANTIS AND HYPERBOREA

ALTHOUGH OTTO RAHN did not say so explicitly, his whole thesis is oriented toward a search for the basic belief of Aryan mankind as seen in the Grail, the living myth conveying the eternal destiny of the blood. The author of *Crusade Against the Grail* (*Kreuzzug gegen den Gral*) sought to bring together in a single daring synthesis (it was precisely this which accounted for his success among the Hitlerites) the Cathar epic with its essentially Gnostic doctrine, itself heir to a higher knowledge of which some vestiges still remained, whose earliest beginnings fade into the hypothetical and mysterious past of Hyperborean civilization. Atlantis, fact or legend, was to Rahn the last *élan vital* of the magnificent tree in whose shade man had savored the Golden Age.

The myth of the lost continent, land of supermen, is closely related to the theory of cycles of the human race, a notion dear to Plato and one which has not ceased to be repostulated ever since, by the whole esoteric tradition. "At the



time of the Golden Age," writes Hesiod, "the gods clothed in air moved among men."

The priests of ancient Egypt could recall (their sacred books give testimony to it) a vast continent located in the middle of the Atlantic in a region whose western limits were approximately the Azores and whose eastern coastline extended to the Straits of Gibraltar.

Plato, who claims to have learned of this tradition from Solon, relates thus the history of the lost continent:

... In those days the Atlantic was navigable, and there was an island situated in front of the straits which are by you called the Pillars of Heracles.<sup>1</sup> The island was larger than Libya and Asia put together, and was the way to other islands, and from these you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean, for this sea which is within the Straits of Heracles is only a harbor, having a narrow entrance, but that other is a real sea, and the land surrounding it on every side may be most truly called a boundless continent. Now in this island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful empire which had rule over the whole island and several others, and over parts of the continent, and furthermore, the men of Atlantis had subjected the parts of Libya within the columns of Heracles as far as Egypt, and Europe as far as Tyrrhenia.<sup>2</sup>

The information given in this extract, taken from *Timaeus*, or *Concerning Nature*, is further developed in *Critias*, or *Concerning Atlantis*, which describes in some detail the sunken continent:

Poseidonis, walled, terraced city with gigantic doors made of gold, with its canals, its huge temples, and its system of government under its king-priests, interpreters of the laws given by the gods, in whose forefront were Poseidon or Neptune, king of the seas, armed with his trident.

Again, it is Plato who tells us that the island of Poseidonis, last fragment of Atlantis, was swallowed up by the seas 9,000 years before the time of the sage Solon.

The geographer Strabo, as well as the philosopher Proclus, confirm Plato's statements. How could Solon have known about the Atlantan tradition? Only one answer is possible: The Egyptian priests, who *claimed to have gotten their information from the Atlantans themselves*, passed it on to the Greek voyagers who often visited their country.

Strangely enough, most of the recent scientific evidence confirms the existence of a continent which sank into the seas thousands of years ago.

In the nineteenth century, the naturalist Germain made a detailed study of the fauna and flora of the Cape Verde Islands and of the Canary Islands with the best means then available. He noted the similarities between the fossilized flora of these islands and that of all the other archipelagos stretching from the Florida coast to Mauritania (in all, a vast region). We let these particular findings speak for themselves, as we do not know of any earlier, comparable investigations; however that may be, the significance of the facts themselves are in no way diminished. Even more convincing are the theories of modern ethnologists such as Madame Weissen-Szumanska, whose remarkable research is described in a convincing work, *The Atlantan Origins of the Ancient Egyptians (Origines atlantiques des anciens Egyptiens)*,<sup>3</sup> even though its fundamental hypothesis is a rather daring one. The book is prefaced by no less an authority than Dr. Martiny, which suggests that the work is indeed of a serious nature.

The author, whose viewpoint echoes that of present-day esotericism, attributes Atlantan origins not only to the ancient Egyptians but to the entire race of *Homo sapiens*, our ancestors, a very large number of whose skeletons have been found in the Azores archipelago. Madame Weissen-Szumanska maintains that the origins of pharaonic Egypt itself may possibly be found by retracing Western civilization as far back as prehistory and the human fossils of Dordogne, the earliest trace of *Homo sapiens* known to us.



Going back to the texts of the ancient Greeks, the author asks: Is it possible that Solon, Herodotus, Plato, Strabo, Diodorus, all of whom speak of an Atlantis situated "on the far side of Libya where the sun sets," would have lied? Still, the Egyptians, who transmitted to the Greeks the history of Atlantis, believed Pount, the land of the *Great Ancestors*, was located on the far side of Libya. To the Egyptians this mysterious land was the object of special veneration, whereas they generally held other nations in contempt. Min and Hathor,<sup>4</sup> among the Egyptian gods, are considered as having come from the Divine Land, that is, from Atlantis, the land of Pount.

In this hypothesis the Egyptians, whom we identify as a race of redmen with coppertoned skin and high cheekbones, were themselves "instructed" by another race of which they were themselves a degenerated branch.<sup>5</sup>

To which family can one therefore assign the race of the "bearers" of Egyptian civilization? Everything suggests that they were men of the Cro-Magnon type. The latter, predominant among the aristocracy, are believed to have disappeared from the reigning classes in Egypt around the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>6</sup>

This phenomenon is to be compared with another in the Canary Islands, where in the same period we find an identical human type. Thus, it is possible to postulate that the archipelagos of the Azores and the Canaries, remnants of sunken Atlantis, were the home of the race which civilized Egypt.

Subsequently (still according to this fascinating theory), the original Nilots<sup>7</sup> lost their identity through assimilation with Semitic and Negroid newcomers to the point where they were finally absorbed in the African-Arab-Semitic strain.

The Guanches, who still constitute the underlying strain of the population of the Canaries, would be the direct descendants of the Atlantans. The imposing height (averaging

seven feet, peculiar to all of the mummies found there), their unusually large cranial capacity (1,900 cubic centimeters, the largest known), and their cephalic index (77.77 among the males), suggest a very pure ancestry. Several of the mummies examined were found to have long, curly locks of blond hair.

The date of the catastrophe culminating in the almost complete disappearance of Atlantis into the sea would, according to the same theory, have occurred somewhere near the end of the first paleolithic period. This cataclysm swept into "the abysmal depths almost the entire population, its treasures, its 'Solar City,' venerated and wept for in all of the Egyptian traditions and honored by Plato, according to writings attributed to one of the Seven Sages of Greece."

Other scholars before Madame Weissen-Szumlanska had already formed similar hypotheses. For example, Professor Richard Hemming and his associate Adolf Schulten have stated that "Plato's account of Atlantis was based on sound facts." During fifty years, Schulten carried out historical and archeological research in the Iberian peninsula, since it is at this location that the far side of the great sunken land mass must have been situated. He did not find Atlantis, but instead an Iberian city which had disappeared—Numantia—described in its day by Cornelius Scipio (133 B.C.). Schulten's diggings were undertaken during the period from 1905 to 1908. The renowned German scholar likewise identified the principal city of Atlantis, Tartessos, located in present-day Andalusia. In antiquity, this city was reputed to be fabulously rich. The surrounding countryside has been described by Posidonius (51 B.C. [T.N.]), who gives us a fairly detailed description of it: Fertile fields, an unbelievably large and industrious population—such were some of the characteristics of this land of Tardetania, which was also rich in all kinds of metals, including gold, silver, copper, and tin. According to Rufus Festus Avienus, who in about A.D. 400 wrote a treatise on ancient geography, Tartessos pos-



sessed in about 500 B.C. the most advanced civilization of the ancient West. Could it have been a fragment which somehow escaped the destruction of the rest of Atlantis? Perhaps diggings undertaken near Seville, in the muddy riverbed at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, will reveal the lost city which according to Schulten was the legendary city of the Atlantan kings.

At this point, one question seems very much in order: How and why, if it did in fact exist, was the rich civilization of the Atlantans wiped out? Plato sees the cause of its fall in its insatiable thirst for power and its moral perversity, which swept Atlantans into a headlong plunge of mad pridefulness. It would appear rather that what we have here is a cyclic law governing every civilization, which foresees an inevitable decadence after a certain point of perfection has been attained.

Concerning the fall of Atlantis, Plato says in his *Critias*:

But when the god's part in them began to wax faint by constant crossing with much mortality, and the human temper to predominate, then they could no longer carry their fortunes, but began to behave themselves unseemly. To the seeing eye they now began to seem foul, for they were losing the fairest bloom from their most precious treasure, but to such as could not see the true happy life, to appear at last fair and blessed indeed, now that they were taking the infection of wicked coveting and pride of power.<sup>8</sup>

The German racist sects, obsessed with esoteric notions—we shall see how they fathered Hitler and Nazism—interpreted Plato's writings in a most peculiar way. To them, the end of Atlantis is explained by a racial mix, by a corrupting of the blood which saw the pure race of the white Atlantans assimilated with the "demoniacal" and "inferior" races of the Asian-Semitic type.

We can well understand the interest that certain occultists (whose groups have propagated its implications through-

out the world) have shown concerning the myth of Atlantis, since it *established an historical continuity of the white race* by demonstrating its material and spiritual ascendancy over all other races since time immemorial.

It should be added, however, that the German racist groups at the end of the nineteenth century, especially those sects born of World War I, were not alone in linking their beliefs with the tradition of Atlantis; the Theosophists, guided by the famous medium Madame Blavatsky, likewise claimed to know the distant past of the Great Ancestors. Madame Blavatsky declared that she herself had succeeded in reading, in its entirety, the secret manuscript relating the history of the fabulous continent, which was said to be in the Vatican Library (a second copy was reputedly in a monastery in Tibet).

These same groups (including the founder of anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner,) are convinced that the Atlantans had mastered the most modern scientific techniques, and possibly some superior to our modern science: unconventional weaponry, motorized vehicles, rockets and even space vehicles, as well as machines enabling them to move about in time, into past time as well as the future. Their utter control of the forces of nature, having transformed itself into a "black force," swept them into an unparalleled cataclysm, unleashed perhaps by their "demoniacal" mastery of nuclear energy.

We are here in the domain of pure imagination and each of us can conjure up the Atlantis of his dreams. For the Austrian scientist Hörbiger, the gigantic size of the men of that continent was beyond question: The mammoth ruins of Tiahuanaco, in the heart of Peru, the terraces of Baalbek in Lebanon, had to be the work of these supermen. The colossal buildings found near Lake Titicaca, at 4,000 meters altitude, remain an enigma to archeologists and scientists, but is that a sufficient reason for believing that there once existed such fabled giants? Our own feeling is that this kind of thinking



seems altogether imaginative. Still, it was exactly this direction that the Knights of Poseidon<sup>9</sup> took, among whom were Nazi sympathizers. Seeking to go back to an age even before Atlantis, they identified the remote, primordial origins of what we call the Occident with the existence of the magic isle of Hyperborea. The mysterious continent was believed to have once existed at the site of Greenland and Iceland. A shifting of the earth on its axis accounted for these highly civilized lands having become the glacial region which we now know. Inhabited by "giants several meters tall," Hyperborea was thought to be a land even more developed than Atlantis and which perhaps had been civilized by extraterrestrial beings.

That the Greeks and Latins knew about Hyperborea and its capital Thule is attested by the works of Herodotus ("... a glacial island located in the Great North where lived transparent men"), Pliny the Elder, Diodorus of Sicily, and Virgil. In *Medea*, Seneca makes the following prediction:

In centuries to come, an hour will come  
When will be discovered the great secret buried in  
the ocean,  
When the mighty island will be found.  
Tethys will once more reveal the region  
And Thule, henceforth, will no longer be known as  
the place where the Earth ends.

The Celts, the Vikings, the Germanic peoples, all thought of Thule as something like the Garden of Eden, analogous to the Land of the Other World, of the Quest of the Grail . . . "beyond the seas of the Fortune Islands (Canaries [T.N.]), further than the dense fogs which defend the route leading to it," in this island "where the Hyperboreans hold power over all the secrets of the world." More than all others, the Germanic peoples clung to the legend of Thule. It was on this same legend that they based their pagan religion and their occult political aspirations through the twentieth cen-

tury. This myth has never weakened. It inspired Goethe's *Faust* and Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*. The *Ballade of the King of Thule*, written by Goethe, has an esoteric meaning which has not been lost on true believers.

The legend of Thule has therefore to do with that Hyperborea which was supposed to exist in the Great North, somewhere between Labrador and Iceland. Although a large island of ice surrounded by "high mountains having the transparency of diamonds," Hyperborea was not just one huge block of ice: "In the interior of the country,<sup>10</sup> there was a gentle warmth which encouraged a lush vegetation. The women were unbelievably beautiful. Those who were fifth born in each family possessed extraordinary gifts of clairvoyance." The man of Hyperborea, descendant of the "Otherworldly Intelligences," is described in the *Book of Henoch* (Chapters CVI-CVII): "His flesh was as white as snow and red as the rose petal; and the hair on his head and his scalp were white as wool; and his eyes were beautiful." In the capital of Hyperborea, Thule, lived "the scientists, cardinals (high priests?), and the twelve members of the Supreme Rite. . . ."

At that time, without a doubt, the gods lived among men, sharing with them in the gold cup, ambrosia, the sacred drink which gives eternal youth. We find here once more the old Germanic and Scandinavian legends<sup>11</sup> recalling the epic age of the man-gods and of the creation of the world, whose myth is to be found at the heart of all of the major religions.

#### THE THEORIES CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

The myths, which tell us of superior and fantastic civilizations of the past and constitute the principal source of the diverse esotericisms, are generally tied to doctrines concerning the irreparable fall of man. Stories of an early, superior



race, equal to the gods or born of the gods, are found in the numerous theogonies, which are at the same time cosmogonies. Here is what they tell us: Twelve thousand years ago, the Flood almost completely wiped out the civilizations then on earth. Having taken refuge on the high plateaus of the Himalayas, Iran, the Rocky Mountains, Ethiopia, the Peruvian Andes, the four great races—yellow, white, red, and black—began repopulating the planet.

The whites, who had taken refuge on the mountains of Iran and Central Asia, possessors of the secrets left to them by the giants of Hyperborea, emigrated en masse toward the west, some 9,000 years before our time.<sup>12</sup> One branch migrated toward Europe and the west but, forgetting their ancient knowledge, regressed into crude cults. A second branch, hostile to black magic, migrated toward the east and founded the civilization of India. A third and last branch moved toward the Mediterranean basin, assimilating with other races during its wanderings. It brought into being the brilliant civilizations of Assyria and of Egypt.<sup>13</sup>

Such legends, which doubtless contain a certain element of truth, are linked to the belief in a periodic renewal of the human species. Thus, man would have lived through four earlier cycles, the last being the cycle of water, or of the deluge, a remembrance of catastrophic proportions recorded in Tibetan and Vedic writings, as well as in the Scriptures. The notion of periodic Apocalypses, whether deserved by men or not, satisfies our reason, for it bridges the gaps of recorded history at the same time that it explains the meaning of the Creation as being an eternal "becoming."

Nonetheless, a reading of the particular legends which have come to us is itself highly informative. The race of giants and cyclops who people Greek mythology are also mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 6:4; Numbers 13:33-34; I Kings 17:4-7) and suppose life-support systems very different from those we know. For example, for the human pineal gland to develop to the point of permitting an almost limit-

less growth, earthly weight would have had to be substantially less than it is now. Of course, some will get around this by hastening to reply that our earliest ancestors were extra-terrestrial beings from another planet and possibly even from another galaxy. But were they to have come from the outermost limits of the cosmos, the problem of the creation of the world would still remain. Man's suffering is explained essentially by the fact of his not knowing his beginning (in the metaphysical sense of the term) and his becoming.

The major religions, vying for men's loyalties, try, with more or less skill, to reply to this fundamental questioning. Two theories meet head on in this spiritual battle: The first, turning principally on the Judeo-Christian tradition, sees in the Creator a Good God, author of the world and of matter according to a plan which is explained in the biblical Genesis. God being good and creator of matter, the latter must necessarily be good by its very nature. All further questioning becomes irrelevant.

This conception of things, which ensures peace of mind, has been able to satisfy the masses. But it has never won the support of the elite, for it avoids in its simplicity the problem of conflict, which is at the center of all human activity. Whether the combat is between good and evil, fire and ice, or lightness and darkness, man is at grips with a world which he must "transmute" if he wishes to realize fully his destiny. Challenging spiritual monism, there stands, ever fought against and always rising up again, the dualist cosmogony, full of energy, which conceives of life as an unending fight between diverse elements. We inhabit a world which is not congealed or static, but quite alive and in full evolution.

The old Germanic legends, as well as the Nordic sagas and the Hindu Vedas, teach exactly that, through a mythology which sometimes seems to be most complicated. From the earliest times Persia also acknowledged cosmic dualism with the Mazdaist (Zoroastrian [T.N.]) religion of Light. If the Germanic peoples are descended from the same Indo-Euro-



pean branch as the early Persians, the points of convergence of the two beliefs can scarcely astonish us. Thus, the lightness-darkness dualism and the religion of the solar star, placed at the center of the religious structure, are symbols common to the Germanic peoples spoken of by Tacitus and Zoroaster. This being so, it is not surprising that Nietzsche, the German philosopher who stressed the renewal of man and the will of might, found in the sources of the Iranian tradition the poetic inspiration of his *Zarathustra*.

Likewise, the Scandinavian mythology of the Edda, written down in the tenth century by the Icelandic monk Sigfusson (but dating assuredly from an infinitely earlier period),<sup>14</sup> reveals a concept of the world which foresees, after the splendid reign of the gods (that is, of the human sages inspired by the highest knowledge), the terrible *Twilight of the Gods*, fallen creatures striving in vain, before the assault of the forces of Darkness, to reconquer their throne amidst the confusion resulting from the chaos of the nations. But the cycle must come to an end, and after a battle of epic proportions the gods will be vanquished, dragging the world down with them until a new dawn witnesses a coming forth from a land made pure, the Light, and the "sign of justice." Such themes are found in the teachings of Zoroaster, the great prophet of Mazdaism and the spiritual leader of a religion which sought to bind together the threads of knowledge lost, that is to say of Gnosis.

## 4

### The Gnosis, or Supreme Knowledge

#### THE QUESTIONING

TO KNOW HIS BEGINNING and his becoming has always been the unending yearning of man.

It is to this most fundamental need that Gnosis addresses itself. The Greek word *gnosis* means "knowledge." To achieve integral knowledge of the world, of its material and spiritual end, is the purpose of Gnostic questioning.

It is not given to the masses, however, to penetrate secrets of such a magnitude. Before he can have access to the arcana of the supreme mysteries, man must go through stages of initiation, each on a higher mystical plane than those preceding, without which it would be impossible for him to understand the teaching finally given to him. In these conditions revelation shows itself to be the privilege of the initiate alone. On the other side is the common *Pistis*, or belief of the masses of the ordinary "faithful." Illumination for the Gnostics comes from the knowledge of a book of superhuman



origin. This tradition of the Great Book is also that of the Grail.

It is a mistake to think of Gnosis as a mere metaphysical current within Christianity itself. Gnosis is a movement of original thought succeeding an older aspiration of mankind, whose roots were nourished by Greek philosophy and the sacred science of Egypt. More than anything else, it is an attitude toward life and things which, by its interpretation of the world, sets itself apart from other lines of religious thought. Professor Puech states: "We call or one can call gnosticism—and also, Gnosis—any doctrine or religious outlook based on the theory or on the experience of the gaining of salvation through knowledge." (*Le Manichéisme*)

Through all the gnosticisms, however different, and all through history, one can identify a Gnostic outlook which is characteristic of a singular type of metaphysical understanding. In this respect the gnosticism of the heresiologists goes so far as to constitute a type of spirituality which knows no time, whose ideology tends unceasingly to reappear in Europe during periods of great crisis (our own age being no exception), when the traditional religions show themselves to be utterly incapable of addressing themselves meaningfully to the metaphysical torments of mankind. Hitlerian National Socialism finds its logical place in this unremitting torrent which, from the earliest times of the Christian era, has been assaulting the entire Western world.

For the adepts of esotericism, Gnosis appears as the source and very cornerstone of all the religions, their purpose being that of bringing about the liberation of man through *absolute knowledge*. The existence of a primordial tradition preserved in a small number of initiatory centers explains, in the viewpoint of those spiritualists who are disciples of René Guénon, the common ground of the major religions.

On the philosophical plane Gnosis offers something entirely new. It effects a synthesis of Eastern and Western modes of thought, the East yearning for deliverance, and the

West yearning for salvation. In this fusion metaphysical knowledge is handmaiden to man's mystical impulse, which carries him to the very summit of the universal hierarchy.

In fathoming this persistent tendency to return to the cosmic sources, we have endeavored to go back as far as possible. The primordial source of every Gnosis appears to be in the Brahman religion, known through the sacred books of the *Vedas* and *Bhagavad-Gita*. According to Nazi thought, which in this particular case espouses an old notion already expounded upon by Theosophy, this was the first step forward taken by mankind after the destruction of Atlantis. The German expeditions to Tibet in 1937 and 1943 had for their mission the discovery of a connection between the vanished Atlantis and the first civilization of Central Asia. For Edouard Schuré, the esoteric author of *The Great Initiates* (*Les Grands Initiés*),<sup>1</sup> "the Brahman religion and civilization represent the first stage of post-Atlantan humanity. In simple terms this stage was the conquest of the divine world through primordial wisdom." The great civilizations which followed—Persia, Chaldea, Greece, Rome (Egypt occupies a special place), the Celto-Germanic world—represent the moving forward of the white race. The idea which impels and guides all of the great religions and civilizations is that of the conquest of the earth through the application of the divine revelation.

According to this theory, primordial intuition, following the fall of Atlantis, increasingly weakened as speculative philosophy advanced, particularly in the Aryan race, in proportion to the development of its own faculties: those of rigorous observation, analysis, and reason, from which comes the notion of personal freedom and of liberty. Meanwhile, the soul's hidden capacities do not get lost among mankind, but it is to an elite that belongs the responsibility of bringing them out and developing them in secret safe from corrupting, outside influences. That is the *raison d'être* of initiation. The energy developed by this concentrating of the



spirit, instead of its dissipating itself throughout the entire universe, soars toward a single point (the solar verb which is the logos, animator of the planetary system, and spiritual quintessence of the physical sun). The revelation of Zoroaster, in earliest Iran, is the first stage in the phenomenal growth of the mighty civilizations of Persia and Greece, in the vast migration of the Aryans toward the West.

#### ZOROASTER AND THE RELIGION OF LIGHT

In the heartland of Central Asia, at the foot of the Pamir and Hindu Kush Mountains, at the roof of the world, lies a turbulent and wild country, Iran. The green of the oases alternates with the arid deserts in this region of extreme contrasts. The Count de Gobineau, who served for a long time as French ambassador in Persia, describes this vast region:

Nature has arranged Central Asia like an immense stairway, whose top she seems to have reserved as the place of honor for the cradle of our race. Between the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Black Sea, the land gradually rises. Enormous summits placed in tiers (the Taurus, the Gordyen Mountains, and the Laristan chains), lift up and support the provinces. The Caucasus, the Elbrus, and the mountains of Shiraz and Ispahan, add a colossal tier which is even higher. This enormous platform, whose majestic plains extend to the Soliman and Hindu Kush mountains, ends in one direction in Turkestan, at the threshold of China, and in the other, at the banks of the Indus, frontier of a world no less vast. The dominant note struck by this Nature, the feeling which it evokes above all others, is that of immenseness and of mystery.

Such was the land adopted by the early Aryas, which was the home of Zoroaster, the first of the great initiates known to us, who would found a religion of grandiose principles.

At the time of the birth of Zoroaster, about 4500 B.C., ancient Persia was inhabited by the Aryan tribes, black-haired Caucasians whose lives were dedicated to growing the sacred

wheat and to raising great herds of beef. They worshiped fire.

But for several centuries another race had been invading the land of the pure and the strong: the hereditary enemy, the Turanian, member of the yellow race with slanting eyes. Expert horsemen, pillagers, and nomads, the Turanians seemed inexhaustibly prolific. Like the Iranians, they worshiped fire, but in its crudest manifestation, a demoniacal and cruel form. They offered human sacrifice, delivering up their victims to two monsters who had survived from prehistoric times, pterodactyls whom the priests had made symbols of their cult. In this invasion the Iranians were overrun<sup>2</sup> and took refuge mostly in the mountains, when they were fortunate enough to escape falling under the victor's yoke.

It was during these unhappy days that there was born among the mountain tribes of the Elbrus a child of royal lineage named Ardjap. After an adventuresome youth spent in hunting buffalo and harassing the Turanian, the young man had a vision. Already, some years earlier, a seer had predicted to him that he would be a king without a crown but mightier than all other monarchs, since he would be crowned by the Sun.

So Ardjap withdrew to the mountain, where he received initiatory teaching from a patriarch by the name of Vohumano, according to the legends. From this moment he took the name of Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, which means "star of gold" or "splendor of the Sun" in Persian. The Sun priest Vohumano, possibly the inheritor of the secrets of Atlantis, instructed his disciple and made him the apostle of Ahura Mazda, the god of light of Iran.

According to the fragmentary Parsee writings which have come down to us, it was at this time that Zoroaster conceived the theory of the two worlds in opposition: Ahura Mazda was the principle of good and Ahriman, god of the Turanians (who worshiped the darkness), was his opposite, who propagates the cult of the serpent and arouses envy, hatred, and



tyranny. It is not surprising that the followers of Aryanism saw in the Turanian the enemy of the race of the pure and the strong; that is to say, the enemy of the early Aryans.

Zoroaster, the legend continues, spent several years in meditation, clad only in an animal skin and having for his only companion a rock eagle. Tormented by frightening visions brought on by solitude, Zoroaster emerged from this trial victorious. During one of his visions, Ormazd, the power of light, appeared to him. Certain contemporary writers interpret this to mean that Zoroaster was visited by creatures from outer space, described as having the form of angels and unearthly bodies.

Whatever the interpretation, the fact is that this revelation made a profound impression on the hermit. Spurred by a new ardor, Zoroaster came back down among his people. Converting his own tribe, he spread the sacred word throughout Iran, preaching three principles which are the heart of his creed: purification, work, and battle. Amplified, this meant purification of the soul and the body through prayer and fire worship; tilling the soil with the plow and extracting the sacred essences of the cypress, cedar, and orange tree; and fighting Ahriman and the Turanians confounded in their world of darkness.

Won over by his enthusiasm, galvanized by his preaching, and having rediscovered their origins while confident of their future, the Aryan tribes renewed their struggle against the Turanians whom they gradually pushed back beyond the mountains, after forty years of battles whose outcome more than once seemed in doubt.

As he was about to die, Zoroaster, like every great initiate, had the prescience of his people's future. He saw splendid Nineveh in the form of a wild buffalo trampling underfoot the neighboring peoples who attempted to oppress the pure Arya; triumphant Babylon in the form of a serpent spouting fire, repelling the attacks of Ormazd's eagle; and finally the winged lion, symbol of the Persians and the Medes

(descendants of the Aryans), marching victoriously at the head of an innumerable army. But suddenly he saw the magnificent lion changed into a ferocious tiger which began to devour its own young, spreading desolation and death to the heart of sacred Egypt and to the sanctuary of the Sun.

If this vision did take place it is of uncanny accuracy. Indeed, history was to work out according to the plan glimpsed by the apostle of the Sun. However, in spite of his gifts, Zoroaster lacked a cosmogony, a universal vision. That was to be brought by Manes.

#### MANES AND HIS SCHOOL

Manes, "the apostle of light," was born in A.D. 216 according to the Persian *Chronicles*. His existence is known to us through various writings, the most important of which are the *Acts* of Achelaüs, who was bishop of Kashkar in Mesopotamia and had philosophical exchanges with Manes. Descended through his mother Miriam from the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacids, Manes, or Mani, was Babylonian by birth but Iranian by blood and by his aristocratic lineage. He found his religious inspiration in Mandeism,<sup>3</sup> a sect of uncompromising believers to which his father Patek belonged.

At the age of twenty-four, he had his great revelation. Breaking with his father, he claimed to be the heir of those already sent before him: Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus. After a voyage to India to be initiated and where he received the learning of the Brahmans, Manes went back to Iran to teach his doctrine.<sup>4</sup>

The new religion, called Manichaeism after its founder, benefited by the protection of King Shāpūr I (of the Arsacid dynasty and related to the family of Manes). But after the death of this sovereign, the Manichaeans began to be persecuted. Power had passed into the hands of the Sassanian dynasty and the young monarch Bahrām I, who hated



Manes. Arrested, thrown into prison, and loaded down with heavy chains, the prophet died on February 26, 277, after twenty-six days of great agony. Legend has it that he was flayed alive, after which his skin, inflated with air, was hung at the gates of Ctesiphon. Manichaeism remains the most persecuted religion in all of history, and this notwithstanding, the growth of the sect was prodigious. Toward the West, Egypt felt the impact of the new doctrine in its Christian communities and in its pagan schools of philosophy, as did Palestine and Rome. In the East, Manichaean belief spread as far as China where it had a phenomenal success until the time of Genghis Khan. The fourth century saw the heresy firmly rooted in North Africa (Saint Augustine was a Manichaean from A.D. 373 to 382), Asia Minor, Greece, Illyria, and as far as Gaul and Spain. In the fifth century, Manichaeism receded before the persecutions of state and church and withdrew into the shadows during the following century. In the eighth century, however, it fathered the Paulicians of Armenia and then the Bogomils, predecessors of the Albigensians and the Cathars within the Gnostic movement. A religion which enjoyed so much success deserves a closer look and reflection on its doctrine.

Manichaeism is radically different from Christianity, even if certain writings are shared by the two religions.<sup>5</sup> The first and principal dogma of Manes was that of the two principles, the good and the bad. In this he was in agreement with the Buddhists, the Persians, and the Christians. But he made the confrontation go back to the very beginning of things, and he did not accept the fact that the world was made from nothing. According to him, an eternal matter had been created by the good principle, and the bad principle constantly fought with the good for possession of it. The world was created by Christ; that is to say, by the divine essence infused into his creatures. In time the victory of good would be complete, and all things would be purified.

This last doctrine is precisely the same as Zoroaster's, concerning the final victory of Ormuzd over Ahriman.

Although Manes was not a Christian, he acknowledged Christ. However, he did not think He had taken on human flesh, had been born, or had suffered. That is why Theodore is correct when he says that *the Manichaeans called Christ the Sun of this world, that for them Christ was not the body of the Sun, but that he was in the Sun as father of the inaccessible light.*<sup>6</sup> This is what St. Augustine also states. In this also the Manichaeans were pure Zoroastrians and could accept, in a mystical way, the cult of Mithras,<sup>7</sup> which was widespread at that time.

Manes did not think much of the prophecies of the Jews; he found they contained many errors. He made diverse accusations against the ancient patriarchs and found, even in the Decalogue, the religion not of one god, but of many.

These Manichaean statements can be questioned only with difficulty. However, if we know the doctrine of Manes only through his detractors, it is the fault of the Christian Church which destroyed all of his manuscripts. It can nevertheless be said that Manichaeism was a Gnostic religion. Manes himself acknowledged ties with two major Gnostics of the second century (Marcion and Bardesan), but the doctrine of the apostle of light (with its initiatory hierarchy<sup>8</sup> and its dualistic conception of the world, which is at once a theogony and a cosmogony) reveals itself through a universal knowledge concerning things divine, celestial, and infernal. All transcendent realities, as well as physical phenomena and historical events, find their place and their explanation in this knowledge. As in the first Christian Gnosés, Manes recognizes an intermediary world which comes between matter and the spirit of God, "the Father of Grandeur." This world is made up of superior hierarchies in the image of the cosmos, the best known of which are the angels, the archangels, and the eons (whose existence, at



least as concerns the first two, is recognized by Christianity). The Manichaean considers himself as having been "thrown" into an evil world where he is by nature a stranger, belonging to the race (*genos*) of the chosen, of the resolute, of superior beings, hypercosmics. If he feels out of his element, "in exile" in this world, to use the expression of Serge Hutin (*The Gnostics*), it is because the Manichaean, being a Gnostic, "feels within himself the acute nostalgia for his place of origin from which he has fallen." You don't come from here; your beginnings are not from here; your place is the place of life."<sup>9</sup>

Manes died leaving behind him "as in his cosmogony, the image of a human soul hungering after purity, knowledge, and liberty,"<sup>10</sup> even if his message has seemed engulfed by the wave which "carries off mankind toward materialism and the world of darkness."<sup>11</sup> Not everything disappeared, however, since Catharism seized the torch of the Manichaean tradition and the main inspiration of Manes, Christian Gnosis, survived him. It is this Gnosis whose principal aspects are so important in the evolution of esoteric thought.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND GNOSIS

We have already defined Gnosis in its traditional aspect, noting that it was the aspiring to a higher knowledge. Having studied the earlier Gnostics within the Great Tradition, citing Brahmanism and stopping momentarily to examine the doctrine of Zoroaster (which gave birth to Manichaean synthesis), we arrive at Gnosis properly named, a product of Greek thought and singularly Pythagorean. We shall see how this Gnosis penetrated to the center of Christianity, along with the old neopagan substratum, and was finally snuffed out by the dogmatism of the emerging Church.

Greek philosophy, we tend to forget today, fulfilled the function of popularizing esoteric doctrine. The thinkers of antiquity, who were also sages, felt the need for two doc-

trines: one public, the other secret. If ancient Greece produced physicians like Thales and legislators like Solon and Draco, it also produced a first class initiate: Pythagoras. He never wrote down his secret doctrine save in esoteric signs and disguised in an elaborate symbolism. He was recommended as a model by the Neoplatonists of Alexandria, the Gnostics properly named of Christian patrology, and named as a precursor. Indeed, his doctrine is the first synthesis built around a central theory: We find therein the hidden doctrine of Egypt, illuminated and simplified by Greek genius. In particular, the connection with Hermes Trismegistus is striking: The law of mystery once more hides ultimate truth, and absolute knowledge can be revealed only to the initiate.

One cannot help but compare the principle of Pythagoras with the Sun of the ancient Egyptians, when the prophet of the solar religion, the high priest of Ammon-Ra, unveiled the secret knowledge to the new initiate from the top of the temple of Thebes. The latter, recalling the passages of the *Book of the Dead*, acceded to knowledge, sustained by a vision of the three pyramids and the stars that were depicted to him as his future abodes. And if a corner of Isis' veil had been lifted for a moment, he could nonetheless experience the satisfaction of having glimpsed the supreme mysteries. Moreover, once the initiation was finished, he became a priest of Osiris, a guardian of the sublime knowledge.

The stormy life of Pythagoras can be compared from certain standpoints to the vision of the boat of Osiris, pushed out into the middle of the raging waters, as it would be imagined by the Egyptian initiate navigating on the River of the Dead. Still, Pythagoras forged ahead, at no time letting his boat drift off course. He saw Cambyes at the head of the Persian armies invade Egypt,<sup>12</sup> sack the sacred temples of Memphis and Thebes, and destroy the temple of Ammon. But Pythagoras' suffering was not at an end: He was interned by Cambyes in Babylon, at that time the symbol



of the Hebrew prophets and the assimilation of peoples by Asian despots.

These trials taught Pythagoras that all religions were rays of the same truth. He held the key, the synthesis of all these doctrines, in esoteric knowledge. The experience he had acquired showed him a humanity threatened by Asia because of the ignorance of its priests, because of the doctrinaire attitudes of its scholars, and because of the chaos of its democracies.

Having managed to make his way back to Greece, Pythagoras had long discussions with the Hellenic priests. He told them of his Egyptian initiation and of the mysteries of Osiris, and he spoke to them about Babylonian occultism. It was only after he had established some inspired Pythonesses and had made Delphi a living center of spiritual action that he left for Greater Greece and Crotona, where he would die with thirty of his disciples. But he had achieved his goal, the Pythagorean school would last two centuries more, and his teaching has come down to us through his disciples.

The chain of the great initiates did not break with the disappearance of Pythagoras; the Athenian Plato carried on his thought. Through the Greek Argystas, Plato was able to find a manuscript of Pythagoras.<sup>13</sup> The *Timaeus* of Plato is in this sense an authentic condensed version of Pythagorean cosmogony. By creating a sanctuary for philosophy, the *Timaeus* opened an "antechamber" to high initiation. That is why the Academy of Athens, founded by Plato, continued in the great School of Alexandria whose principal representative was Plotinus (A.D. 205-263), a Neoplatonist who took up the pagan tradition again in his *Enneads*. His spiritual heir and successor Iamblichus (fourth century),<sup>14</sup> tried in his *Mysteries of Egypt*, to perpetuate the esoteric tradition of the priests of Ammon; but his efforts were overwhelmed by Christianity.

That explains why, in order to combat the influence of the Church, the Gnostics sought refuge in its very bosom. This

brings us to Christian Gnosis or simply, Gnosis. We can now better understand the doctrinal efforts of the Church from the second century onward, to rid itself of this subverting influence which attracted all of the lofty minds of the Christian community. We know very little concerning Gnosis during the early centuries, for the Church lost no time in covering up the inroads, as we would expect.

The specialists on Christian Gnosis distinguish in it two main branches: (1) Syrian Gnosis; (2) Alexandrian Gnosis. In the first, the main representatives were Simon the Magician, Saturninus, and the Ophites; in the second, we find Basileides, Valentinus and his disciples, Carpocrates, the Docetes, etc.

There is no question that this movement constituted a considerable danger for the Church; it threatened to divide it into numerous sects or chapels, which would have eluded the control of the priesthood. Still, the Gnostics were lofty minds; these men brought with them something which experience would eventually bring (though partially) to the Church: a cosmogony, a philosophy of Christianity as well as the determining of its relationship to Paganism and to Judaism; in a word, Gnosis brought to the Church a more profound understanding of its faith.

But this sophistication of the ecclesiastical movement was to hasten its demise. Since this philosophy had replaced revelation, it furnished the Church with the needed pretext for condemning this attempt by Paganism to live under the Church's roof.

In relation to Christianity, Gnosis seeks to find its level on a lofty plane. Gnostics, therefore, do not aim at denying the significance of Christ as an example; they see in Him a divine creature devoid of a fleshly existence that one can call perfect; or more simply, they see a man endowed with great spiritual vigor, intuition, and wisdom.<sup>15</sup>

The Gnosticism of the second century, known to us through Simon the Magician and which developed in Syria,



seems strongly marked by Hebrew and Eastern influences. On the other hand, the Alexandrian Gnosis has its roots in Greek philosophy and in the sacred learning of Ancient Egypt. Certain attitudes point, however, to a common source of the two lines of thought—the rejection of the Old Testament, of the Law of Moses and his Decalogue. Moral law cannot in such an ethic take precedence over the wisdom born of knowledge.

As we have suggested, there is a continuity between mystical pagans and Christian Gnostics; one has only to consider the common usage of certain symbols, of which the main ones are the cup and the book (*Volumen*) which transmit the revelation. However, the Christian Gnosis of the Syrian branch remains full of orientalisms<sup>16</sup> peculiar to the Hebraic tradition and more generally to the Semitic religions. Its manifestations are based on the Mother cult, or feminine principle. The *Gospel of Eve* and the *Pistis Sophia* in particular (the only Gnostic writing which has come down to us in its entirety) bear the imprint of Hebraic influence and increase the secondary entities, the ancestors of the multiple demons of the Kabbala. The attitude toward sexuality is radically opposed to the Jewish and Christian ethic and commands that the Gnostic conception of things be adhered to.

Like Marcion, almost all condemn sexual relations leading to procreation, because this imprisons new souls in matter. In practice, this attitude allows for certain mitigating circumstances. While the Gnostics totally reject sexual relations for the initiate, they allow the marriage of the ordinary laity (who can yield on this principle without falling under the sway of matter).

This position makes sense only within the context of a certain outlook on the world. For the Gnostics, humanity had lost the *key to knowing* and had thus been plunged into chaos. The purpose of continence was obviously to impede the perpetuation of the realm of darkness, so long as man

had not found again the essence of his being and the original purity of his ancestors.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, in the Luciferian Gnosis, especially among the Ophites and the Perates, one finds a reminiscence of *Primordial Knowledge*: The serpent of the Bible is no longer considered as a symbol of evil, but as a messenger of the God of Light, or Logos. While the demiurge has imprisoned Adam and Eve in a miserable world, Lucifer brought them the knowledge of good and evil, the Gnosis which saves or makes divine.

Gnostic thought, imitating the form of the serpent, is not rectilinear but circular. It goes from God to God through the world issued from him, from the spirit to the spirit by way of matter, and from life to life by way of death. The one produces the whole, and the whole becomes again the one. That is the meaning of the ancient symbol of the serpent biting its tail. It is "the wave which flows in itself" of the German mystic Eckhart.<sup>18</sup>

The Gnostic believes that man can discover the intimate secret of the unity of the world, provided that he is willing to enter the wings of the cosmic theater and to mobilize the total efficacy of his spiritual powers in order to rend the veil of Maya. For Gnosis, faith does not suffice and is even considered to have no value in itself.

Though the skein of myths is admittedly tangled, one discerns a line of continuous thought which stands out clearly in the most elaborate manifestation of the Gnosis: the Basilidian philosophy. That is why, after this rapid glance at the ensemble of the Gnostic tradition, we shall give some attention to the Alexandrian Gnosis and Basilides.<sup>19</sup> We note that the Basilidian outlook was later taken up by modern German philosophy and particularly by the Thule Society which counted among its members Rosenberg and Dietrich Eckart (principal initiator of Adolf Hitler). That alone should give some idea of the importance of this school.

To Basilides chaos is the work of the demiurge (a creature



who pretends to imitate God), but by his action, God animates matter, which explains the intimate association of the two principles (light and darkness) within the material world. Man, through the spirit which illuminates his soul, is possessor of light and can attain knowledge if he does not give in to the world of darkness, which is also in and around him due to the reign of material degeneration and the return to chaos, in the corruption of the blood, and the triumph of quantity over the aristocratic principle.

In the scale of creation, man is furthest removed from chaos and the unorganized. Likewise, in the human order certain races made up of elite are closer to the divine spirit than others. Preeminent among these races is the white race which is the crowning achievement of creative thought. It will be given to it to master matter and to harness the cosmos while remaining faithful to the principle of purity which is within it. For the Gnostics and, in particular, for Basilides, "every living evolution consists of a differentiation and a separation, of a sorting out of material substances originally mixed together."

For the Gnostics the spiritual world is an archetype which takes its origin in the material world but moves off increasingly toward the infinite and the immaterial, according to the otherwise meaningless expression "what is high is like what is low." Thus Basilides sees the world as an organized and hierarchical whole where matter is not radically separated from spirit. On high reigns the Spirit who is the Logos, divine thought which takes consciousness of itself. Below extends the pneuma (which is an unconscious thought by itself but of purely spiritual essence) and the ether (a part different only in degree from the soul of the material world). The pneuma is represented as the soul of the world encircling the earthly universe: Christianity gave it the name of the Holy Spirit.

According to Greek philosophical thought and the terminology of Empedocles:

There is no birth for any mortal being, not any more than there exists an end which would be death. Everything is simply a mixture and an exchange of elements. Birth is a term invented by men. When elements combine and come to light, whether among men, wild beasts or plants and birds, they call that birth. When the elements separate, they speak of hapless death.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, substances begin to be organized according to purely mechanical laws appropriate to their respective importance. Spirit, which for Basilides is material and made up of tiny atoms, rises and hastens to return to its principle. The pneuma, which is already a more opaque matter, extends like an outside envelope around the world. The ether rises and extends under the pneuma. After this, there is the air, which fills the next region. Up to this point, there is nothing but a purely physical process. But since each of these elements contains an elementary spirit, the scientific cosmology becomes a mythico-religious cosmology. Thus Gnosis reconciles, in a vision not lacking in grandeur, that which modern science has sought to separate (contrary to what the enemies of Gnosis, who present it as a doctrine of death and of annihilation, have claimed).

But the evolution of the world is not done. The last part of the cosmic Spirit must rise toward the universal Spirit. Only then will harmony be reestablished and will the world have found its fulfillment in a normal ordering of things: spirit, soul, body. It is a question of mutual interpenetration: in the same way as the body, the soul and spirit of man converge in an organic oneness. The business of salvation is to enlighten men to their true nature and to all creation as God had wished but had not been realized. Once again, it is Gnosis which is capable of saving man, and not blind faith.

All of man's sin is in his desiring, which makes him want to rebel against nature. Every desire against nature, whether pure asceticism or the wish to go beyond the limits imposed on man by nature and the concordant will of God, throws



man back anew into a state of suffering. Every immoderate desire must, therefore, be smothered by reason. Above all, sexual desire, at least for the elite, must be smothered, for sexual drive is the primal activity of man. Basilides, followed by Isidore,<sup>21</sup> sees in love a nonmoral desire, natural but not necessary, tearing man away from his most noble destination. For them, nature and therefore morality consist in satisfying the sex drive outside of love. This viewpoint of Basilides finds some support in Plato. Concerning transmigration, the *Timaeus* names love mixed with pleasure and suffering as being among the irrational impulses which man must vanquish in order to escape the cycle of births. On this the Basilidian outlook approximates that expressed by the German poet and philosopher Richard Dehmel<sup>22</sup> and by the mystic Meister Eckhart.<sup>23</sup> For Basilides there was a downward fall of the species followed by an ascending evolution.

This philosophy has in fact many points in common with Paganism, whose basic wisdom the Gnostics do not reject. The name of this god is like the Mithra of the Pagans; indeed the numerical values of each letter of the name Abraxas, meaning God, add up to the number of days of the year, that is to say, the time it takes the Earth to revolve around the Sun.<sup>24</sup> The word Mithra adds up to the same numerical value. The Sun is Helios and Mithras Abraxas is the Archon who contains within him, in a oneness, the ensemble of the solar circle. Mithras and Helios are in a relation of father to son. Mithras is the mighty god; Helios is his logos, through whom he develops, creating the world and playing in its affairs the role of mediator between man and god, as the liturgy of Mithra and the discourse of the emperor Julian<sup>25</sup> on Helios the king attest. In the final analysis, Basilides' metaphysics are a very elaborated pantheism, heir of Greek philosophy but leading to an altogether original system.

These principles were taken up again later. Goethe, who

was an initiate, made use again of the Gnostic image developed by Basilides, that of intermediary worlds separating man from his principle which is God.

Familiar throng whose domains extend like the storm around the vast atmosphere, and which on all sides holds in store for man an infinite number of dangers. The band of spirits from the North sharpen against you their tridentlike tongues. That from the East dries out your lungs and feeds upon them. If it be the deserts of the South which send them, they heap about your head flame with flame, while the West vomits a swarm of bees which at first refreshes and nourishes you but ends up devouring, all about you, your fields and your harvests. Inclined to do damage, they gladly listen to your outcry, they even obey you, because they love to trick you; they announce themselves as envoys of Heaven and, when they lie, it is with an angelic voice. (*Faust*, transl. Gerard de Nerval)

Like Hildegard,<sup>26</sup> Goethe draws from a common source: the Gnostic *Weltanschauung*, in which all the entities who rise up against God and man—evil angels, spirits of the spheres and of the stars, winds, etc.—hold such an important place. God can only intervene in the cosmos from without by sending the thought of God, the Logos who will bring knowledge to men. Man cannot succeed in finding the way because he holds within himself the entire world: *He is a microcosm in the very heart of the macrocosm*. He is composed of matter, but he also contains the Logos, the divine spirit who reigns over the upper regions of the cosmos. Through his efforts man raises himself from Earth to the Moon by crossing the hostile realm of the demons—the ionosphere which sends back wavelengths toward the Earth.

Faced with the danger posed by this resurgence (particularly noticeable in Basilides) of neo-Paganism, the Church reacted with brutality. At the Council of Nicaea in 325, Gnosis in its different schools was condemned as a whole. As Leisegang<sup>27</sup> has pointed out, Gnosis belongs to the spiritual atmosphere of Greece. It was antiquity and its freedom



of thought which the bishops wanted to destroy. Offspring of Hellenic philosophy, the Gnostics denied their origin by clothing their doctrine in an Eastern garb, an age-old custom. Modern science has reversed this relationship in looking for the principal motifs of Gnosticism in the Eastern religions. Abbé Barbier—a specialist in the study of secret societies and of their influence within the Church—understood well the Gnostic phenomenon when he wrote: “The role of the Gnostic Church is to preach a doctrine which is *that of the superior human race, which has not been corrupted by the ideas of the Semito-Couchitic races* and which follows most faithfully the teaching of Christ the Saviour.”<sup>28</sup>

Having appeared in the second century of our era, Christian Gnosis was laid under an interdict at the same time as the neoplatonic schools, but was subsequently to find its strongest expression in Catharism during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Chastised a second time, neo-Gnosticism would emerge again at the end of the nineteenth century under the cover of science but as a reaction against “scientific progress.” The link between this renewal and Nazism is certain.

If Gnosis has been able to develop and perpetuate itself like an underground stream, it is because there existed and still exist “power-stations,” temples where knowledge is kept and from which the orders go out.

## 5

### The Centers of Initiation

#### SANCTUARIES OF ANTIQUITY

IF SINCE earliest antiquity men intent on acquiring knowledge<sup>1</sup> have had to undergo the trials of initiation, these could not take place just anywhere. There had to be temples where the teaching could be given and schools of sages to dispense the teaching. That was the reason behind the initiatory centers, remote places where the essence of knowledge was concentrated in the hands of priest-scholars: pontiffs, druids, brahmans, or lamas.

In Egyptian antiquity (and we know of no more ancient school of initiates), among the numerous sanctuaries there were several initiatory centers,<sup>2</sup> in Upper as well as in Lower Egypt. Until the invasion of the Persians under Cambyses, the sacred city of Thebes held within its temples the secrets of the high, sacerdotal knowledge.

The sanctuary of Ptah, consecrated to Osiris (God of the Dead), had at its head a particularly learned clergy. In this Holy of Holies, priests evoked the Sun of the dead, the Sun of Osiris who guides the departed toward their final



abode and who can draw the living into the realm of death. Cambyses, in his ignorance, wanted to be initiated in these mysteries, but the priests of Thebes, fearful of offending the gods, refused to call forth Osiris for the great king. Cambyses had them put to death on the spot. He then went to Memphis, where Plato had studied, to the temple of Saïs, the only place where the sovereign could still be initiated into the vision of Osiris.

Plunged into a lethargic sleep by means of a drink extracted from the flower of the nepenthe (this drink facilitating the "voyage"), Cambyses lay out in a sarcophagus. He came to only to die mad in the Syrian desert whither he had fled, consumed by the unbearable vision. One cannot attain the supreme level of knowledge without a long preparation, under penalty of falling through "the other side of the mirror,"<sup>3</sup> losing one's mind or life itself. In the trial each neophyte was staking his life and soul, for it was written on the pedestal of the statues of Isis: "No mortal has raised my veil." Very few triumphed over the seven trials comprising the initiation. Moses was initiated into the mysteries of Egypt, but according to the version given by Gérard de Nerval, he failed the last test, that of chastity. That is why he was denied the honors which he desired. His pride offended, Moses declared war on the Egyptian priests, fought against them with knowledge and prodigies, and ended up delivering his people in an uprising.

Orpheus and Pythagoras underwent the same trials, but only the latter came out of them victorious. The priests welcomed him into their sacred college. Henceforth a great initiate, Pythagoras visited India (where he received the teachings of the Brahmans), and also Gaul. He then returned to Greece where he founded the shrines of Delphi and Eleusis in order to perpetuate esoteric knowledge. Apollonius of Tyana,<sup>4</sup> in the first century, and Manes, also traveled extensively throughout the West and East, visiting those places where learning might be found.

The German neo-Gnostic sects seized upon the idea that Moses and the Hebrews, in stealing Egypt's secrets, had become adept in black magic, while the Greeks, successors to the priests of Ammon, possessed white magic. Rudolf Hess, who spent all of his youth in Egypt, was chosen by Hitler to be his heir. Hess also belonged to the Thule Society, which was the secret prime mover of Nazism.

Wisdom was the endowment not only of Egypt. There were also wise men who came to Gaul: the Druids, well-known by the distorted and ridiculous image left us by the history books. For Maurice Magre, "without a doubt, the Druids of Gaul must have represented one of the highest points of spirituality attainable by men."<sup>5</sup> Pythagoras himself, as we have seen, visited the Celts in order to receive the teaching of "wise men." "For whatever might be the primitiveness of peoples, he who might have but a cloak and a staff but who was born under the sign of knowledge, found, from India to Ireland, places of wisdom and of instruction where he received a password enabling him to go on further."<sup>6</sup>

"The Druids went out apparently from a center located in Ireland, a center which at the beginning must have recruited its members in Asia, as is proven by the close similarity in the organization of the Druids and of the lamas."<sup>7</sup> Venerating the Gallic gods Teutates, Esus, and Taranis, the Druids became doctors, judges, educators, while winning the esteem of all by their high degree of spirituality.

These men lived ascetically like Tibetan lamas or Christian cenobites, far from the turmoil of the cities, off in the deepest part of the forest which, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, covered France at that time. Forming schools for instruction, veritable "oases of thought" amidst the prevailing ignorance, the Druids religiously imparted to one another their knowledge. Their temples were the forests of great oaks and their colonnades, the boles of ancient trees. They had a reverence for life in all of its forms: be-



lieving in metempsychosis, they hunted no animals; for fear of harming the soul of the trees, they constructed only light huts. They were also familiar with the language of the beasts and the birds, and they communed with nature. They despised gold, symbol of envy and of the covetousness of men, and proclaimed it damned, forbidding for a long time its use in Gaul. When the Tolosates, after their victory in the Orient, brought back gold they had pillaged, they were enjoined to throw it into a lake. It was on this same site that the church of Saint-Sernin<sup>8</sup> was built.

The Druids also taught the insignificance of earthly life in comparison with that of the beyond, and that death was to be scorned. Sacred suicide was lawful and regulated, a fact which has been the basis of accusations of human sacrifice by the Druids.

We do not know much about the Druids because their teaching was oral and it is forever lost. But if someone of the stature of a Pythagoras, or an Apollonius of Tyana visited them, that is proof enough of the high esteem in which they were held in ancient times.

The Druids disappeared in the first century A.D., as mysteriously as they had come, increasingly harrassed by the Roman legions. But perhaps they have left in the forests traces of their ancient learning.<sup>9</sup>

#### ASGARD ("CENTER OF THE WORLD") AND THE KING OF THE WORLD

There is another current, comparable in some ways to the Egyptian tradition and that of antiquity (and no less venerable and important), where we find again numerous traces of a common source. We refer to the shrines of Central Asia and Tibet, the roof of the world, which some consider to be the heart and center as well. The Tibetan tradition is known through numerous books published during the last fifty

years. Considering the amount of this evidence, it may be useful to summarize it.

A tiny number of Westerners have been initiated in the monasteries of Tibet. They often relate the same legendary story told by the lamas. Tradition says that after the great cosmic catastrophe in which Atlantis was swallowed up, some of those men who had managed to survive consecrated themselves to the task of perpetuating the moral legacy of mankind. They had taken refuge on the heights of the Himalayas. There they buried the astronomical tables, the records engraved on metal sheets, and everything else containing the elements of learning. It was from there that they set out again across the uncivilized world.

The writer J. Marquès-Rivière, who has repeatedly condemned Freemasonry as a spiritual swindle, is equally well-known as a specialist in Buddhism. In this capacity he claims that the monastery libraries hold extremely important documents for the history of mankind. These scrolls, hidden in grottoes, have since been saved from being vandalized by the Chinese invaders.

The entire history of our earth could be reconstituted, according to other authors, using the famous *Akashic Records*.<sup>10</sup> It would suffice for the initiate to plunge into a state of ecstasy, to take again mankind's trip through time, and to reconstitute his past. Our own feeling is that things are a bit more complicated than that. If Central Asia, chosen land of the early Arya, has been able to shelter and preserve a part of the tradition and the knowledge of our ancient ancestors, it is not because of some magic formula. Magic is there only to throw us off course and to allow for all manner of extrapolation.

This history of Tibet seemingly goes back thousands and thousands of years. Before this, Tibet was, according to this tradition, at sea level. According to T. Lobsang Rampa (*The Third Eye, Le Troisième Oeil*)<sup>11</sup> the land around Lhasa



contains sea fossils and shells, proving that this region was once under the sea. For reasons unknown, after the Hyperborean continent was engulfed in a volcanic cataclysm, some members of the Supreme Initiation were thought to have taken refuge in the Gobi Desert, which was at that time fertile and thriving. There they developed a high degree of civilization. Some twenty centuries later, a new catastrophe, unleashed this time by man's hand, made this territory a vast desert. The survivors of Hyperborea then took refuge in what we now call Tibet, which was at that time almost at sea level. Subsequently, wishing to hide from the sight of the ungodly, they disappeared into a network of subterranean passageways and caverns in the Himalayan mass.

We remain skeptical concerning this explanation. The legend seems, however, to have a basis in truth, for Lobsang Rampa reports, in the work referred to earlier, disturbing facts which invite comparison with the legend. After the last phase of the initiation, the young lama was led by the father abbot down into a deep vault. After having related his descent into the very bowels of the earth, Rampa describes these secret depths:

In the center of the cavern there was a black house, which shone so resplendently that it appeared to be made of ebony. Strange symbols and diagrams like those I had seen on the walls of the underground lake covered its exterior. We entered the house through a high and wide door. Inside I saw three caskets in black stone decorated with engravings and strange inscriptions. They were not closed. Stealing a look at what they held, I felt my breath taken away, and I suddenly felt very weak.

"Look, my son," the eldest of the priests said to me. "They lived like gods in our country at the time when there were not yet mountains. They strode over our soil when the seas bathed our shores and when other stars shone in our skies. Look well, for only the initiate have seen."

I obeyed; I was both fascinated and terrified. Three naked bodies, sculptured in gold, were lying there before my eyes. Two

men and a woman. Each detail of their bodies was faithfully reproduced by the gold. They were huge! The woman measured more than nine feet and the taller of the men, not less than sixteen feet.

According to the same author, well before the time of history, the Earth was much closer to the Sun. The days were shorter and much warmer. Magnificent civilizations were rising. But a wild planet, striking our globe, changed its orbit. The Earth began to turn in the opposite direction, causing catastrophes, raising the seas, collapsing the lands, producing the upheaval of Tibet which was suddenly thrust 13,000 feet above sea level. This testimony differs substantially from our first version and we know nothing about its author, not even his name. Let us note, however, that the myth of the fantastic civilization and of the lost continent is a constant which we find time and again at the heart of the Tibetan tradition.

But let us get back to our subject, which has to do with the mysterious subterranean cities comprising Asgard, or "the center of the world."

René Guénon, the well-known philosopher of esotericism, in his book *The King of the World (Le Roi du monde)*,<sup>12</sup> believes in the existence of a hidden spiritual center from which are sent orders by superiors, intended for the Great Initiates of this world. The adepts of the Vril Society and the Thule Society shared with each other this belief which they inculcated in Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess, and Rosenberg. It was precisely in order to get back in touch with the spiritual "power-plants" that Hitler entrusted to the *Ahnenerbe*, the ancestry research branch of the SS, the task of organizing an expedition to Tibet, directed by the ethnologist Standartenführer SS Dr. Scheffer, who received the charge of locating the origins of the "Nordic" race which was, according to the Nazi theoreticians, of Indo-Germanic stock. The report of this expedition is not entirely lost.



There are extracts in the microfilm archives of the State Department in Washington. It would be interesting to find one day the complete text.

For his part, J. Marquès-Rivière, a reliable author who made numerous trips to India and who was initiated into lamaic Tantrism, relates in his book *In the Shadow of the Tibetan Monasteries* (*A l'ombre des monastères tibétains*) what the lamas of the highest rank revealed to him. According to the Primordial Tradition, the King of the World lives still:

Thus, over all the earth and beyond reigns the *Lama of lamas*, he before whom the Tashi-Lama himself bows his head, he whom we call the *Master of the three worlds*. His earthly realm is hidden, and we of the "land of the snows" are his people. His realm is for us the promised land, Napamakou; we carry in our hearts the memory of this place of peace and light. It is there that we will all be one day and in a time not far removed, for our oracles are explicit on this point. But one day, to save the eternal tradition from possible desecration, we shall flee before the invaders of the North and of the South and once more hide our writings and our doctrine (an allusion to the Chinese invasion). . . . Immutable, he reigns over the hearts and souls of all men. He knows their secret thoughts and helps the defenders of peace and of justice. He has not always been in Napamakou. Tradition tells us that before the glorious dynasty of Lhasa, before the sage Passepa, before Tougkapa, the *omnipotent master reigned in the Occident, on a mountain surrounded by huge forests*<sup>13</sup> *in the country where the strangers now dwell*. Through his spiritual sons, he reigned over the four corners of the earth. *In those times the flower was on the swastika. . . . But the black cycles chased the Master from the West, and he came to the East, among our people. He then erased the flower, and the swastika alone remains, symbol of the central power of the gem of Heaven.*

Let us note that in this very important passage, the gamadion is placed at the center of the myth of Asgard. The wheel is in effect a symbol of the world accomplishing its

rotation about a fixed point, a symbol which is transcribed by the swastika. But in the latter the circumference of the circle representing the manifestation is not traced, so that it is the center itself which is directly designated: The swastika is not a figure representing the world, but indeed, representing the action of the principle in relation to the world.

René Guénon has explained exceedingly well Nazi thinking as concerns Asgard, although he has not made reference to it. But there remain to be explained some very strange coincidences. Thus for him as for the Nazis, Hyperborean Thule represents the first and supreme center of our present cycle, or Manvantara. All the other sacred isles are but reflections of it. Thule is still called the White Isle. In India the White Isle is considered to be the abode of the blissfully happy, which identifies it clearly with the land of the living. René Guénon did not make any of this up, since the Frenchman Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, in a posthumous work entitled *Mission of India* (*Mission de l'Inde*, 1910), describes a mysterious initiatory center already designated by the name of Asgard. Granted, the book is full of improbabilities. Nonetheless, the Russian Ossendowski, who is scarcely a dreamer, relates in *Beasts, Men and Gods* (*Bêtes, hommes et dieux*, 1924) the tradition of the King of the World, which has remained very much alive among the Mongol peoples. According to this legend, the King of the World would be in southern Mongolia. Here is what a Buddhist priest said to Ossendowski:

This realm is Agharti. It extends across all the subterranean passages of the entire world. I heard a learned Chinese lama say to the Bogdo Khan that all of the subterranean caverns of America are inhabited by the ancient people which disappeared under the earth. One still finds traces of them on the surface of the country. These peoples and these underground regions recognize the sovereignty of the King of the World. There is nothing so strange about that. You know that in the two greatest oceans of the East and West, there once were two continents. They dis-



appeared under the waters, but their inhabitants went into the underground kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

The author reports that numerous lamas stated to him that they had seen the King of the World, although he himself had never glimpsed him. That is confirmed by Marquès-Rivière who claims to have seen an envoy from Asgard who declared: "I am, my son, an envoy of the Kingdom of Life; our monastery is the immense Universe with its seven golden doors; our realm is in the three worlds of this cycle. . . ." <sup>15</sup>

Reality or mystical fiction, Asgard remains an enigma for the Westerner. However, it may be that the myth of spiritual power-stations corresponds in Europe to the appearance of the groups of German occultists in the nineteenth century. Small wonder that National Socialism picked up this tradition for its own benefit.

However, the reference to the regions of Central Asia, depicted as the source of all wisdom, is not in itself new. The legend has little by little gained favor, but that its source is ancient is shown by the seventeenth-century Swedish philosopher Swedenborg, who asserted: "Henceforth it is among the sages of Tibet and Tartary that we must look for the Lost Word." For her part, Anna-Catherine Emmerich, the holy visionary of the nineteenth century, stated that Jesus was an initiate of Tibet.

The fact is however to be reckoned with: After the destruction of the ancient world, the esoteric tradition disintegrated in the West. A part of that knowledge, saved from the disaster, survived in Manichaeism and in Gnosis.<sup>16</sup> As for the rest, it was lost with the destruction of the sanctuaries and returned to the Orient, where it resurged with renewed vigor after a number of decades. It is this which explains the abundant literature concerning India and Tibet.

We have described the end of Catharism; now we must enter the labyrinth of Templarism, of Rosicrucianism, and even of Freemasonry in an effort to pick up once more the

thread<sup>17</sup> which takes us up to nineteenth- and twentieth-century neo-Gnosticism, itself obscured by the development of a badly understood theosophy, conceived as a pseudoreligion.

It is true that the Church, by its rigid theology and its sterile dogmatism, has been a major factor in obliterating ancient knowledge. Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, the author of *Mission of the Jews* (*Mission des Juifs*), has little affection for the Catholic Church, ever opposed to religious currents that reveal a tradition different from that of the Bible:

One finds everywhere some notable exceptions, but on the whole, the conduct of Christian theologians concerning all the religious societies and all the theocratic structures apparently unknown to Moses and to Jesus, has been as sectarian, pagan, and barbarous as possible. Had they been able to do it, they would have destroyed altogether all of this evidence. It is this same mentality which will bring about the destruction of the Gnostic encyclopedias. It is this same kind of ignorant and brutal domination which put flaming torches into the hands of the Irish monks and had them burn 10,000 birchbark manuscripts in runic writing which held the traditions and the annals of the indigenous Celtic race of our continent.

Unfortunately, the book burnings were not to suffice. The Church first persecuted the Cathars with the help of the secular arm. Then, it joined hands with the temporal authority against the Templars, to whose history we now briefly turn.

#### THE TEMPLARS AND THE ROSE-CROSS<sup>18</sup>

Pierre Chabert, whom we follow here, maintains that there were three principal Gnostic periods in the history of mankind: (1) *that of the first three centuries*, catalyzed by the appearance of Christianity on foundations already there; (2) *that of the Middle Ages*, with European Catharism and Templarism, Islamic Sufism, and perhaps the last whispers of primitive Manichaeism in the Middle East and Far East;



(3) and *that of the modern age*, which begins with Rosicrucianism and goes up to National Socialism.

The Templars, as is now known, dreamed of a theocratic Europe under an imperial Messiah. To attain this goal, all of the nations had to be subject to a truth beyond their comprehension. We find here once again the idea of eternal knowledge.

It is undeniable—and it cannot be stressed too often—that the faith of the Crusaders in the superiority of Christianity must have been severely shaken by their military defeats and their knowledge of the mystique of the Moslem Sufis, much superior to the unsophisticated beliefs held by the clergy. After the defeats encountered in the conquest of the Holy Land, they came around to the idea of an entente with the Saracens (especially the more intellectual Crusaders, among whom were numerous Templars, who had realized that the Moslems were neither barbarians nor Satan's hellhounds).<sup>19</sup>

In *The Luminaries* (*Les Illuminés*), Gérard de Nerval writes: "The Templars were, among the Crusaders, those who sought to bring about the broadest-based alliance of Eastern ideas and those of Roman Christianity."

It has been said, and properly so, that Palestine was a mysterious focal point, an ideal hinge between the two worlds of East and West. The very name Templars<sup>20</sup> was calculated to evoke not only the Holy Sepulcher of the Christians, but also, for the Jews, Solomon's Temple, sacred depository of wisdom and of knowledge.

The great historian Michelet stressed this fact in the nineteenth century when he wrote:

The idea of the Temple, higher and more all-embracing than that even of the Church, hovered as it were, above every religion. The Church could be dated, the Temple could not. Contemporary of all the ages, it was like a symbol of religious endlessness . . . The Church is the house of Christ, the Temple is that of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, to quote a great specialist of Templar history, John Charpentier: "the conciliation or the reconciliation of the past with the present and with the future, in the overwhelming thought of divine oneness"<sup>21</sup> was the task that the Templars had assigned themselves. Small wonder, then, that the religious instruction of the soldiers of the Temple was reinforced by a secret initiation aimed at linking up with the Great Tradition, which is at the heart of the present study.

It was not until 1818 that an Austrian archeologist, Hammer-Purgstall, published a work on the subject, entitled *The Mystery of the Templars Revealed*. In this book he showed that the Order of the Temple had adopted the doctrine and practiced the rites used by the Gnostics. In support of his thesis, Hammer-Purgstall called attention to four statues long since kept at the Imperial Museum in Vienna, which were claimed to have been found in the houses of Templars there.

The statues are, in fact, Gnostic idols, of a degenerated Valentinian character. The most imposing one is a pharaonic personage with a beard and having, like the other three statues, all the attributes of hermaphroditism. The inscriptions on the figurines refer to fire and to the bisexual character of the personages, which is a Gnostic trait. The reader, whom we have taken through the Gnostic initiation, will understand that what we are dealing with is the representation of eons, that is, divine emanations, intermediaries between the Creator and matter according to Gnostic pneumatology.

It is, therefore, to this Valentinian<sup>22</sup> Gnosis that the Templars must be related. What has thrown off many historians of Templarism is that they were forced (as was Marquès-Rivière, for example) to suppose that a "group existed, in the midst of the Templars, having secret ambitions for power and sustained by a rigorous esoterism." In support of this theory, these historians recall that in order to speak of



the Gnosticism of the Templars, there would have had to be a militant Gnosis during the time at which they lived, which in their opinion is not the case.

In 1945, an Egyptian farmer from Luxor<sup>23</sup> while working his field discovered a large earthenware jar which, when broken apart, gave up some most revealing parchments. These documents, written in Coptic, are from the third century of our era. They are sacred books of the Gnostics, and in them one can see the "Revelations of Hermes-Thoth" side by side with the "Secret Gospels of Thomas and Philip." This proves that the old Egyptian religion grafted itself, along with the Gnostics, on nascent Christianity, as it had already grafted itself on Hellenism with Pythagoras and Plato. There is consequently no reason for our not viewing the Templars as neo-Gnostics who attempted to link up with the Great Tradition.

Anatole France, ridiculing the occultists' claims of having links to the most distant past through a secret descent, recognized only the Illuminati of Bavaria in the eighteenth century as authentic successors in this affiliation. That was, without a doubt, jumping a bit to conclusions. We have already described the role of the *Illuminaten Orden* and its racist elements heralding National Socialism. But that should not make us forget the earliest point of departure, represented by Gnosis and its most typical resurgences, which are the Order of the Temple and Catharism. In the following chapter on Wagner we shall see the overlapping of Catharism and Templarism, as well as the union of the two "heresies" (to borrow a term dear to the Church). For now let us merely call attention to the problem of this alliance in historical terms.

We have already alluded to the temptation of an alliance with the Saracens, which took on particularly urgent tones about 1180. By this time the Moslems began a series of military victories, which were to culminate in their leader Saladin's entry into Jerusalem in 1187. This was to raise a

political and diplomatic question which had to be resolved: Should a *modus vivendi* be arrived at, or should it be all-out war? Obviously, the Roman clergy was in favor of the second solution and prevailed, for the moment at least.

But, opposing Rome, the King of England Henry II Plantagenet and his son Richard the Lionhearted dreamed of dividing the Holy Land with Saladin. Let us note that it was the chaplain of Henry II, Walter Map,<sup>24</sup> who wrote in Britain *Lancelot*, the story of the Knights of the Round Table (which is, more exactly, the story of the Holy Grail of the Cathars). Suffice it to say that Map, like all of the Templars, was in favor of uniting with Catharism against the pontifical omnipotence. To complete the Templarism-Catharism circle, we need only point out that Henry II found the ideal man to carry out his plan in the person of the Count of Toulouse, Raymond V, the "king" of the Cathars.

There were good reasons which militated in favor of choosing Raymond V. In the first place, the king of France had just unleashed a crusade against his heretical subjects, the Cathari. This "crusade" went on for a considerable time. Now it happened that Raymond V controlled all of the ports of the Mediterranean coast from Marseilles to Narbonne. Trade with the "daughter of Toulouse," Tripolitania,<sup>25</sup> a Provençal colony at the time, furnished him with an outlet for the Aquitanian economy. In addition to these tactical and colonial considerations, there were cultural and sentimental ones: The sister of Raymond V had become the wife of Saladin and all of the troubadours would throw in their lot with their masters, Richard the Lionhearted and Raymond, both prince-patrons of the courts of love.

These British and Aquitanian plans were not unfavorably received by the Templars, the latter observing neutrality toward the Midi in the conflict, which pitted it against the king of France and the throne of St. Peter. Henceforth, their political activity intensified in this direction: The trou-



badour Robert de Sablé was elected Grand Master of the Templar order. Numerous Aquitanians followed him as head of the order, right up to the fall of the Temple as a religious organization. But in pursuing this policy the monk-soldiers found their way blocked by the king of France as well as the pope—their fate was sealed. We should not forget that their headquarters was in France, which was obedient to the Church. The politico-religious order having become extremely powerful, its seeking new alliances against the king of France was bound to bring a damaging reaction if the pope ever abandoned the order. And when the order was abandoned by Clement V, it collapsed.

Numerous historians of the Temple have professed not to understand why this intelligent and courageous pope did not oppose the arrest and sentencing of the Templars by Philip the Fair, king of France. The reason, either unknown to them or suppressed by them, is that Clement V, Aquitanian by birth, was what would today be called a collaborator. Aware of what was going on in the Midi by virtue of his own background, he had penetrated the alliance of his compatriots, that is, the Cathars, with the Order of the Temple.

The pope, who never went anywhere without his mistress, the beautiful Brunissende, was beholden to Philip the Fair, who had made him a gift of the pontifical throne and who, by the Concordat of Saint-Jean-d'Angély, had reserved for himself, in exchange, the right to seize the considerable wealth of the Temple. So it was that, instead of some light being shed on this mysterious Order of the Temple, the Council of Vienna in 1311 discussed, among other things, the matter of bordellos within the Vatican and the appointment of an archbishop to Peking. The dissolution of the Order of the Temple the following year was accompanied by no explanation.

The same year (1314) that the Templars, faithful to Gnostic destiny, went to the stake cursing their tormentors, Pope Clement V and King Philip the Fair died, a few months

apart, from some mysterious ailment. Some time thereafter, parties unknown smashed the right hand of the statue of Clement V, which stands on the square before the cathedral of Bordeaux. Mutilation of the right hand was, in old canon law, the punishment meted out to parricides. Readers fond of mystery will note that the malediction called down on the heirs of the Capetians by the last Grand Master of the Temple, Jacques de Molay, was fulfilled the day that the head of the hapless King Louis XVI rolled in the sawdust of the scaffold. A spectator who had jumped up by the guillotine bathed his fingers in the King's blood and shook them out on the crowd, shouting, "I baptize you, people, in the name of Liberty and of Jacques de Molay!" As for the curse put on the popes, the Freemasons took it upon themselves to carry it out, proclaiming themselves to be the spiritual heirs of the persecuted Order.

#### THE ORDER OF THE ROSE-CROSS

Cadet de Gassicourt wrote in *The Tomb of Molay*, 1797 (*Le Tombeau de Molay*):

The day following the execution of de Molay, the knight Aumont<sup>26</sup> and seven Templars, disguised as masons, came to gather up the ashes of the pyre. . . . Then the four lodges (Naples, Edinburgh, Paris, and Stockholm) swore to exterminate all of the kings and the lineage of the Capetians, to destroy the power of the popes, to preach the liberty of all peoples, and to found a universal religion.

But the reference was only to neo-Templars of the Masonic obedience, who recognized Pierre d'Aumont as the authentic successor to Jacques de Molay. Consequently, we cannot accept this legend as explaining the association in question.

Present-day Rosicrucians, for their part, believe that they are one of three branches of a historical "Universal Brotherhood," which also included the Templars (on a magic plane)



and the Cathars. They point to the existence of authentic Cathars north of Nuremberg, in Franconia,<sup>27</sup> right up to the end of the sixteenth century. These were the Bohemian Brethren whose last bishop, Cominius, was in touch with Andreas and Jacob Boehme.

On the other hand, certain writers well-versed in the matter—among them, René Guénon—maintained that the real successor of de Molay was Larmenius. The latter was supposedly followed in order by Bertrand du Guesclin, Henri de Montmorency, Charles de Valois, the Regent, the Prince de Condé, and finally Fabré-Palaprat, who would have the Temple (or its facsimile) emerge into the open in 1808, with Napoleon's blessing and with even the army lending its support. For anyone familiar with the political plans of the French emperor, it seems that he wanted to put the Vatican in its place while at the same time take away the Freemasonry's prestige as an exclusive secret society. Here again, we are unable to find a direct link between this fairly recent Templar resurgence and the Great Tradition.

However, it seems likely that the Rosicrucian Order,<sup>28</sup> which made its appearance in the fifteenth century—after the demise of the Temple—was the true successor of the Templar movement. Christian Rosenkreuz, founder of the order, lived in the fifteenth century, and according to Cadet-Gassicourt (who gives himself away here), if the renowned Count de Saint-Germain<sup>29</sup> claimed to be older than he really appeared, wasn't it simply because Rosicrucian initiates count years in a special way, taking as their birthday the date of Jacques de Molay's death, that is, March 18, 1314?

Moreover, and here we come to an important clue, it seems that the successors of the Templars regrouped around the nascent Rosicrucian Order surreptitiously and under the cloak of alchemy. Rosicrucians, whether of old or of our own time, have claimed as one of "their own" Nicolas Flamel,

the famous alchemist. His ultimate goal, the transmutation of metals and the making of gold, was thought to be a not entirely disinterested one. The realizing of the "great work" and the "philosopher's stone" could cover up much more realistic enterprises. In fact, the alchemical tradition, although it has attracted some lofty minds, appears as a diverting of spiritual forces toward a material object with a view toward acquiring wealth and power. It should be noted, however, that Flamel was familiar with the symbolism of the rose, dear to the Rosicrucians, and that he made frequent use of it. The mystical rose was known to the Templars, and its meaning (symbol of all of the virtues of knowledge) is known throughout all of esoteric tradition.

Remaining for a long time as an underground movement, Rosicrucianism started to define its goals during the Renaissance, which was more tolerant than the Middle Ages toward "sorcerers." In this new age Rosicrucianism believed that the end of a cycle, that of the medieval period, was about to be accompanied by cosmic upheavals. Its members wanted to be the heralds and the founders of this new world purified by fire, and to reestablish a sort of earthly paradise. The abbreviation INRI<sup>30</sup> held for the initiates a non-Christian meaning substantiating this myth: *Ignis Natura Renovatur Integra* (Nature is entirely renewed by fire). This fire, which holds its power from the Sun, has a triple meaning: (1) it is the fire which will destroy a world dominated by evil; (2) it is the interior, mystical fire; (3) it is the fire of the alchemical experiments. For the Rosicrucians, however, alchemy was the "parergon" (that is, the secondary work) while the work par excellence was the "ergon" (which brings knowledge). This thought was translated as: "You are yourself the philosopher's stone; your own heart is the prime material which must be transmuted into pure gold."

Rosicrucianism has been the subject of a great deal of speculation, and some have gone so far as to question its



existence. According to Héron Lepper: "This famous society, assuming that it did ever exist, must be considered as forming the link which ties the esoteric groups of the Middle Ages to those of modern times." That one can question the existence of Rosicrucianism and at the same time see in it a link in the esoteric tradition is rather paradoxical, although we are not surprised. This would be a sign of its power, to come back to an idea of Eric Muraise.<sup>31</sup> We have today enough documents to prove conclusively, by their number alone, the existence of this secret society.

It was in Germany, the promised land of occultism, that the mystical flower of the Rose-Cross developed. A Lutheran minister, Johann Valentin Andrea, revealed its existence for the first time in 1614 in a book entitled *The Chemical Nuptials of Christian Rosenkreuz* (*Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreuz*), where he unveils certain secrets of the sect. The occult group had already been in existence for some time, since Agrippa de Nettesheim (1486-1533), the famous physician Paracelsus (1493-1541), and Heinrich Khunrath (d. 1690) apparently belonged to it. It is during this period, which saw the spiritual flowering of the sect, that the definitive symbol of the Rosicrucianism is adopted: a red rose located at the center of a cross which is itself red in color "for it was splashed by the mystical and divine blood of Christ."

It is thought that the communities of magi, set up almost everywhere in Europe by Nettesheim, gave birth in 1570 to the brethren of the Golden Rosicrucians in Germany. But it is Khunrath, founder of pansophy, who really created the mystique of integral Rosicrucianism which promises to "corporalize" minds and to spiritualize bodies." The "rosae crucis" of mystical persuasion lost some of their influence in the eighteenth century, to the "aureae crucis," a secondary branch having a more pragmatic outlook. This Gnostic curriculum ought not let us lose sight of the goals of Rosicrucianism, goals which have not changed. In July,

1785, a bolt of lightning struck down a Dr. Lange. In his possession were found documents proving that the Rosicrucian congress held at Wilhelmsbad had decided on the death of Louis XVI. The leader of the plot, who was none other than the founder of the Luminaries of Bavaria (Professor Adam Weishaupt), had barely time to flee to the home of one of his pupils and his disciple, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, who gave him asylum. The court of Bavaria, it should be noted, published the archives of the conspirators. Yet, no historian, as far as we know, has thought of asking this question: Why Louis XVI? Everything falls neatly into place, however, in the sequel to these events: The nerve center of the organization, avoiding the mistake made by the Templars, had taken refuge in Bavaria. The creation of Freemasonry, starting with the branch of the "rosae crucis aureae" referred to earlier, served as a front for the real Rose-Cross, which disappeared behind that organization, never again to appear openly. Unfortunately for it, the Luminaries of Bavaria give us an irrefutable clue concerning this plot whose echoes Lafayette himself heard. On July 24, 1789, the Marquis wrote: "An invisible hand is guiding the populace." With the passage of time, we are increasingly sure of the existence of a conspiracy, since we find a Rosicrucian (or one who claimed to be) at the bottom of the "affair of the diamond necklace" which dishonored Marie Antoinette and the clergy, by way of Cardinal de Rohan: We refer to the Italian Cagliostro.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, it appears that the new Freemasonry (especially the French) knew nothing about it. What strengthens our belief is the astonishment shown by Lafayette witnessing the first riots; after all, he himself was a prominent Mason. To his name we can add that of Bailly,<sup>33</sup> who, before passing under the blade of the guillotine, noted with an uncommon lucidity in his *Mémoires*: "It takes a profound mind and lots of money to justify this abominable plan."



It is doubtful that history will ever succeed in tracking down the evidence of this international conspiracy, but there is a strong likelihood that the orders went out from Germany (more precisely, Bavaria) and Great Britain, since they reflected most accurately the politics of the time, and as though by chance, it was these same states which gave refuge to the fleeing Templars, taking no measures against the order, allowing them to have what we would call today a "second conversion."<sup>34</sup>

The quest for knowledge through the Great Tradition did not, therefore, end with the Templars and the Cathari. The Rosicrucian and foremost philosopher of his time, Francis Bacon (d. 1626), treated in his work *Nova Atlantis* the theme of the Holy Land dear to Christian Rosenkreuz. With the subject of the new Atlantis and the lost continent which the Holy Land also was, we have in a prodigious and meaningful abridgment all the dreams of the Gnostics and Manichaeans, the priests of Ammon and of the Cathari, and the Pythagoreans to the Templars reduced to a single synthesis. By now, the search for the Great Tradition has left France, and it is in Germany and Austria that we will pick up its trail. Before we approach that subject, it will help our understanding of the historical phenomena to consider the role of the messiahs of the new age, that is, the prophets.

#### THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The prophetic tradition changed from that of plain oracle which it was in antiquity (for example, the pythiae at Delphi), and became cosmic with the Christian revelation of the visions of Saint John in the island of Patmos, which became an integral part of the Bible, constituting its last book, the Apocalypse. Since the dawn of Christianity, there have been men, illiterate or erudite, who have tried to penetrate this symbolism, which heralds the end of time, to determine how long it would be before the end came.

Whether the times were good or evil, auspicious or ill-omened, or joyous or dark, luminaries, philosophers, and sages have come forth, either to announce the coming of the earthly Paradise or to predict the return of the earthly abode to chaos and destruction (Satan's realm). In medieval times these myths were enlarged by yet another, that of the Supreme Monarch or the Imperial Messiah, the sovereign who would reign over all of Christendom and impose lasting peace in the days before the coming of Christ the King. In France, and especially in Germany, there were powerful monarchs who received favorably predictions of this kind, which served as a real encouragement to those who wanted to see the Empire restored.

On the other hand, the papacy has always looked disapprovingly on these prophets of doom, who stigmatized the misdeeds of the Church and predicted that schism was imminent. At best, the prophecies reserved an insignificant place for the pope. Caesaro-popism has always been considered by Rome to be the worst enemy of the Church, champion of theocracy; Frederick Barbarossa, Frederick II (Hohenstaufen), Henry VIII of England, and Napoleon are there to attest to this fact. The Church does not tolerate any authority outside of itself to give spiritual direction; it is this which led to the Reformation. The union of priesthood and of empire seems imperative, however, to bring into being the New Jerusalem, which is spoken of in the Gospels and which is considered to be the ideal of Christianity.

Concerning this struggle today, which seems to us to have been eclipsed by time, prophesying all through the centuries has not stopped adding new chapters to its legend. Fatima is an example of what we mean. If in France the spring has dried up with Nostradamus,<sup>35</sup> the Apocalypse still stirs the soul in Germany. Did not Hitler proclaim himself to be a Messiah of the new age, unleashing the flood-tide of his barbarous eloquence and announcing, in renewing the



myth of the Holy Empire, a Reich which would last a thousand years?

What were these prophecies? How were they expressed? Who have been their interpreters? If we wish to go back to the ultimate source, we have to imagine ourselves living in the earliest times of the Christian era. "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matthew 16:28) These words of Jesus, announcing the era of the Holy Spirit or of the Paraclete, have a prophetic ring. The Apocalypse of Saint John reflects perfectly the excitement caused by the expectation of the end of the world after the coming of Christ, exacerbated by the misfortunes of the times. Saint Paul reacted violently against this tendency, counseling moderation. But at the same time, the apostle of the Hellenes was to organize the awaiting of the heavenly city. According to the Gospel, he cried out: "But *our* city is in the heavens."

At the time of the first Christian preaching, the Roman Empire was at the zenith of its glory, and the reign of the Caesars seemed to herald the Golden Age. With the reign of Nero, prospects changed, and a period of continuing political upheavals ensued. In the second century, theologians such as Tertullian plunged ardently into apocalyptic interpretation: For him the end of the world was imminent, and earthly goods had even less value than before. Origen (A.D. 185-ca. 255) on the other hand was vigorously opposed to millenarism and distinguished between two cities, the earthly and the heavenly.

Saint Augustine, bishop of Hippo (354-430), was at first a Manichaean. Converted to Christianity, he strove in the *City of God* to get around the problem of the rivalry of the spiritual power and temporal powers by making the emperor subservient to the Church. He set himself up as champion of sacerdotalism. Augustine rejected all millenary outlooks: "The two cities have not ceased to exist side by side until

the end of time. But after, the heavenly city alone will remain, to partake of the eternity of the saints.<sup>36</sup>

However, the struggle was indeed that of priesthood and empire, within the millenary framework of the times of prophecy. Emperor and pope fought with every means for the control of men's souls, and in this struggle the former was vanquished. Upon the death of Theodosius (395), the empire was divided up, while Christianity remained united.

So it was that in the West unceasing efforts to restore the Empire following the great invasions, from Charlemagne to Hitler by way of Frederick I (Barbarossa) and Napoleon, all ended in failure. The Church took all measures to prevent any restoration of the imperial Messiah, whether Roman or German, who would destroy its omnipotence.

Ever since, war between the two swords (temporal and spiritual) threatened. Following the collapse of the ancient world and the failure of the Justinian restoration, the reign of Charlemagne—Emperor of the West amidst the chaos of the nations (800-814)—seemed a new Golden Age to the supporters of empire. Remembrance of these times, enhanced by the legend of the emperor with the flowing beard, remained ever present in the mind of the people, along with a nostalgia for *pax romana*. That is what explains the legend of the sleeping emperor:

The emperor Otto III (983-1002) had been instructed in a dream to exhume the body of the emperor Charlemagne. It was known that he lay at Aachen, but no one knew exactly where. After three days of fasting, the seekers started out on their quest. They found the body of Charlemagne, as Otto had dreamed, in a vaulted crypt, under the Basilica of Saint Mary. The body, perfectly preserved, was dressed in the formal imperial garb and was seated on a rich cathedra. He was shown to the people in this state, and then inhumed in the same basilica, behind the altar of John the Baptist.

The exhuming of Charlemagne by Otto III fired imaginations.



People said that Charlemagne had been found with his scepter in his hand and the Gospels on his knees, that he had only fallen asleep, and that he would awake one day to reign over Europe, as had been prophesied. Following the death of Frederick II (1250), the legend was transferred to him. Then, in the sixteenth century, it devolved upon Frederick Barbarossa, who died in 1190.

Henceforth, for all the Germanies, the promised emperor sleeps within a grotto in Thuringia. He is seated before a table of stone, and since the time of his falling asleep, his beard has already wound itself around the table several times. Sometimes he gets up to inquire of the shepherd who keeps vigil with him: "Do the crows still fly around the mountain?" The shepherd answers sadly: "Yes." The emperor returns to his centuries-old dream while awaiting the day when he will place Germany at the head of all the other nations.<sup>37</sup>

*"Then, the Reich which will last a thousand years will cover all Europe."* As Eric Muraise points out:

The legend of the sleeping emperor will take on a new dimension when it will be based on the poetic transposition of the legend of the Grail, the holy cup, whose revelation will purify and gather together divided Christianity. However, the means of transmission will be different. The myth of the Grail is born in Gaul and goes from there to Germania.<sup>38</sup>

Along with this, the terror of the approach of the year A.D. 1000 continued to grow, while the prophecies of Saint Rémy and Saint Caesarius announce the final schism of the Church, without giving a date. We can draw our own conclusions:

There is a pope who will not dare to look at Rome. There is something which the Romans know among themselves which, before the pope leaves the world, will be visited upon him by our Lord and such wrath that he will not be able to prepare for it. And if he wants the Romans to be increasingly aware of it, it will be for their sins.

Subsequently, the prophecies were to support one another, bringing new flights of fancy. Let us note the monk Glaber, but most especially Joachim de Flora (1145-1202),

a figure who deserves our attention. Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Corazzo, Sicily, de Flora was a mystic tormented by the evil which he saw invading the Church, which he compared to a den of thieves. This noble mind ranks with the Cathari in terms of his striving to bring back purity to the Church. De Flora prophesied God's wrath, which will strike the Church through the power of the new Chaldeans, that is to say, Germany. In addition he foretold the coming of the Antichrist and predicted to Richard the Lionhearted that this Antichrist would occupy the pontifical throne.

The *Eternal Gospel* of Joachim de Flora was widely acclaimed within the antipapal movement. According to this work human history is divided into three ages: the reign of the Father; that of the Son, which would end in 1260; and that of the Holy Spirit, the end of whose reign would coincide with the end of days. This mystic, herald of the days of Empire and precursor of the Reformation, found credence in Germany and also in Italy (since Dante, who was involved with the Templar offshoot known as the *Fideli d'Amore*, situates the pope within one of the seven circles of Hell and belongs to the imperial party of the Ghibellines).

In the mighty battle which pits emperor against pope, two clans (where we find mixed together Cathars, Waldensians, Ghibellines, and Templars) collide during four centuries extending from the year 1000 to 1400. Frederick I Barbarossa<sup>39</sup> had enormous problems with the papacy, but unlike his predecessors, he was unable to move the contest to the ideological plane. Frederick II, emperor from 1220 to 1250, used the more subtle means of esotericism. Emperor of Germany, King of the Romans, King of Sicily, and King of Jerusalem, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen was an amazing monarch. This superb mind and unyielding enemy of the popes was an initiate of Sufism.<sup>40</sup> He spoke several languages including Arabic and Greek. Using esoteric means, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire sought, as had others, the key to hidden things, through the quest for



knowledge via the story of Merlin the Magician and the Grail. Frederick II was also an initiate of the Templar mysteries, and in 1228 at Saint-Jean-d'Acre, he was chosen by the Templars and the Teutonic Knights (bound by a secret alliance) to be Emperor of the World. The plan failed because the Church was able to attack its enemies unexpectedly on a number of different fronts. But the fact remains and a remarkable vestige of this period can still be seen in the octagonal castle of Castel de Monte in Sicily. This edifice was used for mysterious meetings and was to be the seat of the New Empire. Frederick II himself supervised its construction, which attests a secret plan of Templar architecture characterized throughout by a sacred numerology.

This castle bears no small resemblance to a certain Nazi fortress where met the chapter of an order claiming to descend from the Templars and the Teutonic Knights. Its Grand Master was Heinrich Himmler, a fervent admirer of the Middle Ages and of the Holy Empire. The members never tired of hearkening back to the times of medieval esotericism and the antipapal movement. Sufficient proof is found in Hitler's bedside book, *The Genesis of the 19th Century* whose author, H. S. Chamberlain, exalts the heretic Dante and the movement "*Los von Rom*" (Away from Rome). Another hero is Savonarola, who was put to the stake on order of the pope.

Launched in Germany, the antipapal movement found its ultimate expression in Luther, who rejected once and for all Rome's ascendancy. So despite their failure, these battles waged by the Empire heralded and prepared the way for the Reformation—the threshold of modern times. In Germany the Reformation fathered a freedom of thought unknown in the Catholic countries. And from this would surge forth the romantic spirit of the nineteenth century and the new prophets, Wagner and Nietzsche.

## PART THREE

# THE NEW ERA



## 6

### Nietzsche and Superman

THE TWO PRIME INITIATORS of the Third Reich were Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner. Of course, chronologically speaking, one comes later than the other, 1870 serving as the point of reference. Already the mood of the *fin de siècle* was taking shape, and Nietzsche's declaration, "God is dead!" was in the offing, with its man-god substitute which the Nazis transformed into superman.

If the Wagnerian *Twilight of the Gods* prefigures the Nietzschean *Twilight of the Idols*, this is no accident, but rather the living proof of an ideological current made all the more destructive by virtue of its being underground. Contrary to certain doubtless well-intentioned Wagnerians, we believe that there was something else behind the tetralogy, something other than the aesthetic marvel which it is. The poetic message of the Master of Bayreuth really was a German *Weltanschauung*, taking for its inspiration the Gnostic tradition, which was then updated by a racist and profoundly nationalistic Manichaeism. It is well-known that Wagner's music had the effect of a real catharsis<sup>1</sup> on Hitler and made him aware of a political vocation which would



decide the fate of the rest of mankind: twenty million died through the will of this one man. Recalling the worldshaking crimes in which the Third Reich indulged kept us from pursuing our study further without first trying to determine why the Nuremberg spectacles bore such a strange resemblance to those of Bayreuth.<sup>2</sup> Our curiosity was rewarded, for Wagnerian mythology is already racist in character. The Grail symbol contains the idea of the pure blood, the blood which regenerates the Germanic race, and it alone.

As for Nietzsche, there is much that seems to have been passed over in silence, although the basis of his philosophy is known. However, it is after his meeting Wagner and subsequently, at the end of their friendship, that Nietzsche appears to have moved fundamentally away from Christianity. This fact should be stressed, for the tracks have been covered up as if by design. Even so, the questions of religious freedom and the creation of the superman are themselves sufficient justification for looking at the thinking of the German philosopher. It should not be forgotten that the Hitlerian myth of superman proceeds directly from Nietzsche. This superman is indeed resolute man, man freed from all the bourgeois conventions, cynical man, man who replaces his creator, and a man-god.

As Adolf Hitler confided one day to Hermann Rauschning, president of the Danzig senate: "National Socialism is more than a religion; it is the will to create superman."

If National Socialism found a fertile ground in Germany for a vast propaganda undertaking, it was no mere chance of fate. German romanticism had made the Germans accustomed to living and thinking in a magic universe that brushed aside logic and reason.

### NIETZSCHE AND WAGNER

How is it possible for certain people to divorce Wagnerism from the trend of nationalistic and racist thought in the nineteenth century? Wagner is in fact at the center of this kind of thinking. He marks the end of the romantic period of young, Bismarckian Germany and prefigures the pessimism of Nietzsche, which was begun by Schopenhauer. We find in Wagner the socialism of Bakunin and the racism of Gobineau, which were to find expression in his son-in-law, H. S. Chamberlain. It appears certain that the ideas of Gobineau, which appeared in the famous essay on *The Inequality of Human Races* (*L'Inégalité des races humaines*) in 1853, greatly influenced Richard Wagner. He was both anti-Semitic and deeply nationalistic, and he sought to check the decadence of the West and to regenerate it through methods which were used a half-century later by the master of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler. Let us note that Hitler came under the philosophical influence of Wagner's son-in-law, H. S. Chamberlain, whom the Führer was to meet on several occasions in 1923. Author of *Foundations of the 19th Century*,<sup>3</sup> a panegyric of the Aryan race wherein Europe is saved from the chaos of Roman decadence by the Germanic invasions, H. S. Chamberlain was the principal mentor of Alfred Rosenberg, whose *Myth of the 20th Century*<sup>4</sup> was the sequel to the former work and, in a way, its fulfillment.

Wagnerian opera aimed at expressing by Germanic means (that is, romanticism) the human tragedy and impressing this vision on the spectator. Such opera was already propaganda, since it demonstrated to the Germans the primacy of sentiment over reflection and made the German throngs feel like a religious community whose symbol was the Grail, archetype of the cup of pure blood.

In Wagner Germany rediscovered its secret penchant: brutality exquisitely mixed with innocence. It also discovered that stuff



which nature requires and which Hitler will furnish to mask the motives behind all of its actions: so-called noble reasons to justify base acts, world domination camouflaged as World Freedom; a mystical language variously unintelligible, or whipping up the emotions; an adulterated mixture of the pathetic and pompously tragic; and capping it all, a throng of youths, and massed flags, bands, lances, and swords. (Emil Ludwig, *The Moral Conquest of Germany*)

Long exiled and long unappreciated, Richard Wagner had in the end become Germany's idol: in the clamorous apotheoses of Bayreuth, Germany worshiped its own image. Nietzsche, on the contrary, remained ignored and alone; he became destructive and burned what he has worshiped, his idol Richard Wagner. In 1868 in Leipzig, at the home of the composer's sister, Nietzsche made the acquaintance of the author of *Parsifal*. There they were: young Friedrich, who was not yet twenty-five years old; and the master of German music, who was more than fifty-five. Almost immediately, the young Nietzsche, who dreamed of becoming the philosopher and the legislator of this German reform which he so ardently yearned for, fell under the spell of the man whom he called "the savior of Germanic culture." It was to Wagner that he dedicated his first work in 1872, *The Birth of Tragedy through the Genius of Music*,<sup>5</sup> or as we read in the dedication to the master, Richard Wagner, "patriotic emotion" united with "aesthetic enjoyment."

But Nietzsche's evolution caused the author of the *Anti-christ* to part ways with Wagner, when it became apparent to him that art had lost its magic power of regeneration. For Nietzsche, indeed, it is elsewhere that salvation must be sought, and it can henceforth only come from an excess of evil. The lesson will not be lost on everyone, and it can really be said that Germany's defeat in 1918 was a veritable confirmation of Nietzschean thought.

In 1920, the German people listened to, and understood, this philosopher with the thick mustache, this iconoclast who

blasted Spinoza and Saint Paul, Judeophile Christianity, and international humanism. It is Nietzsche that the soldiers of the Free Corps, precursors of the Nazi legions, are thinking about when they fight on the Reich's frontiers against the Polish and Ukrainian Slavs. They are as a living image of the furious fighter that Nietzsche was, reigning over a world in ruins and dragging the German people into the abyss in a vision of the eternal return and the twilight of the gods.

For the combatants, ancestors of the praetorians, it is not only a twilight of the gods, but a twilight plain and simple for the Germans. It is impossible for them to relate to the past while the present is a cause for shame: All that is left is to burn their bridges and to take refuge in a vision of the future since Europe's preeminence is destroyed, as well as the science and reason on which so many hopes had been built. Thus, it was only natural that the "outcasts," as Ernst von Salomon called them, came to reflect on their military defeat of 1918, and discovered the power of magic regeneration preached by Nietzsche. For them, as for the Nazis whose ranks they will eventually swell, evil is linked to man's fate, and he becomes an even more pitiful figure when he attempts to deny it. Nietzsche, too, finds more of the pure in evil frankly acknowledged, in cruelty, and in violence. In his *Beyond Good and Evil*<sup>6</sup> we see the origin of the Nazi concentration camps. "Beyond evil," it is not the joyful surrender to appetites and instincts which we rediscover, but a new rigor, a new asceticism. The miracle that Nietzsche was looking for at the end of his purely Germanic dialectic was the sudden metamorphosis of the evil-doer into a saint. Likewise, and in this regard contrary to Schopenhauer, the will for power in Nietzsche forbids its being satisfied. It is a new, consuming aspiration which pushes on to new conquests, new victims, and an eternal return to evil.

The preparatory phase of nihilism was, therefore, already



well launched with Nietzsche. There remained only to slip into the gaping hole thus prepared the substitute cosmogony, the National Socialist cosmogony, the Hitlerian *Weltanschauung* with its romantic sham. But, before history and its judges, Nietzsche and Wagner are indeed the fathers of this manner of thinking, which hoped to link up with the great Germanic tradition. The man of decadence, the last man whose portrait Nietzsche sketches in stark relief, is none other than the Tristan of Richard Wagner at the moment when there echoes over a Europe fathoming its conscience, the cry of Friedrich Nietzsche: "God is dead!"

#### MAN-GOD AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

All that has been seen in Nietzsche are his preoccupation with religious freedom and the will to power. We shall have to wait for the coming of Hitlerism to see in Nietzscheism the beginnings of a Germanic man-god of the Adolf Hitler sort. It would appear that only a very small number of his readers have grasped the hidden meaning of Nietzsche's writings and of the particular ideology in which they logically find their place.

However, traces of this connection are perceivable in Nietzsche's key work, *Antichrist*. This last work of the German philosopher is significant for more than one reason. In the prologue we find a real clue to the hidden meaning of the *Antichrist*: "This book belongs to the chosen few . . . they alone will understand my Zarathustra." After the foreword the *Antichrist* begins with a sentence pregnant with implications: "Let us see ourselves for what we are. We are Hyperboreans." If we stop to consider this definition in the light of what has already been said concerning the Hyperborean tradition, it will be clear that what we are talking about is Nietzsche the initiate. Therefore, these works assume once more the position which they should never have ceased to occupy, that of a well-defined school of thought

with a precise goal: to return to the ancestral giants through the creation of superman.

This opening statement of the *Antichrist* is completed further on by another passage, which we shall quote *in extenso* for its staggering significance:

. . . Neither on earth nor on the waters, shall you find the way leading to the Hyperboreans: Pindar already knew that much concerning us. Beyond the North of ice, of death—our life, our happiness . . . We have discovered happiness; we know the road; we found the way out of whole thousands of labyrinths. And who *else* has found it? Might it be modern man? "I know not where to go nor whence to come; I follow everything which knows not where to go, whence to come," wails this modern man . . . It is of this modernity that we are sick, of the rotten peace, of the cowardly compromise, of all the virtuous ambiguity of the modern "yes" and "no." . . . Better to live in the ice, than among these modern virtues and the other winds from the South! We were to be sure, valiant enough; we were as unindulgent toward ourselves, as toward others: But for a long time we did not know where to go, to come with our valor. We became moody, people called us fatalists. . . . The question I raise here is not what will follow mankind in the chain of beings, but rather what type of man we should *produce*, we should *want*, as being of a superior quality, more worthy of life, surer of the future.

It is this wish to return to the reign of the giants that explains Nietzsche's hatred of Christianity, which for him is a religion of subhuman beings. This Nietzschean conception of de-Christianization is found again, point for point, in Nazism, whose *raison d'être* in the eyes of its leaders is to reverse the process of degradation of Germanic mankind by the "mongrelized" Judeo-Christian civilization of rationalism. National Socialism also intended to restore the forces of nature in a battle against values which it judged artificial: "Christianity has pursued a war to the death against this type of superior man, it has outlawed all basic instincts of this type, it has distilled these instincts to ex-



tract evil from them . . . Christianity has espoused the cause of everything weak, base, unwarranted."

The Nietzschean technique of de-Christianization is identical to that of the Nazis: The authenticity and the importance of the Old Testament and the Epistles of Saint Paul are rejected as meaningless values inspired by Judeocracy. Thus, from the pen of the author of *Ecce Homo* we have the following:

The Gospels are of inestimable value for what they tell us concerning the gangrene which was already thriving within the first Christian community. What Paul, with the calculated cynicism of the rabbi, brought subsequently to its conclusion was, however, only the process of decomposition. . . . The Gospels are apart. The Bible, in general, does not allow any comparison. We're among Jews: This is the first thing to remember if you don't want to get completely lost. Elaborated with something approaching genius, this self-transposition into something sacred, this counterfeiting of word and of gesture as an *art*, is not the chance creation of some obscure talent or of some freak of nature. The answer is race. In Christianity, seen as the art of sacred lying, we're back with Judaism; it is an apprenticeship, a Jewish, secular, archserious technique which is brought here to its ultimate perfection. . . . *The Christian is but a Jew of more liberal persuasion.*

By war, says Nietzsche, you can achieve a total de-Christianization, and can find again natural man, man as he once was. War makes the varnish of civilization crack, thereby allowing us to find once again the true face of mankind. This primitive man is not the good savage of Jean-Jacques Rousseau; he is a beast of prey. "I have seen the man of the future; he is cruel; I am frightened by him," Hitler said to Hermann Rauschning.

War is thus considered as a proper means. It is good in itself because it frees man from his thinking and thereby brings him closer to God. We find this same idea again, in identical terms, in Hitlerian thinking: An order of leaders

would succeed the Nazi Party and in this order would bloom "free man, man who is the measure and the center of the world, man the creator, man-god."<sup>7</sup>

#### CREATION OF THE SUPERMAN

Nietzsche believes that the superman should be developed through biological selection. This superman is conceived as having first and foremost a subtle but undeceived mind, and he must put to the torch our civilization corrupted by materialism. This new biological variety must, therefore, be protected from all "defilement," that of the Jews as also that of the unsound; this is the first point that must be insisted upon. Further, there is no question of raising the entire Germanic people to this level, but only certain of its members most carefully selected.<sup>8</sup> Nietzsche was the first to develop this idea:

The most essential characteristic of a good and true aristocracy is that it believe itself to be not a function, whether of the royalty or of the community, but their meaning and very justification. For this reason, it must be ready to sacrifice without batting an eyelash a mass of people who must be, in its interest, humiliated and reduced to the state of mutilated beings, of slaves, of instruments. Its fundamental belief, in fact, must be that society does not exist for itself, but is the substructure and the frame which permits an elite to elevate itself to a superior state, whether by virtue of a higher mission, or simply in its own interest. (*Beyond Good and Evil*)

It is amusing that some have tried, albeit in vain, to contrast the Nietzschean superman with the Nazi superman, this viewpoint being based on the aristocratic character of the Nietzschean man-god. It would appear that these interpreters have grossly misunderstood the author of *Antichrist* when they ascribe these noble intentions to him. "Wotan has given me a hard heart," says a proud Viking in an old Scandinavian saga. Such a man took pride precisely in his



not being capable of pity. That is why the hero of the saga adds this warning: "He who from the time of his youth does not have a hard heart will never have a hard heart."

Nietzsche's allusions to the Hyperboreans bring supportive evidence of the Germanic will to return to the myth of their origins: the polar, frigid Thule. Does that mean that, unlike Richard Wagner, we find no reference to the Cathars of Aquitania in the pages of the author of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*?<sup>9</sup> Let us undeceive ourselves and see who is, according to him, the torchbearer of our civilization in the Middle Ages:

[From this] one can easily deduce why the passion love, our European specialty, is obviously of aristocratic origins. We know that it is the child of the Provençal knight-poets, of those magnificent and ingenious men of the *Gay Saber* [Joyful Wisdom; that is, of love] to whom Europe owes so many things, and perhaps its very existence." (*Beyond Good and Evil*)

It will be, moreover, the Cathars of Aquitania who will furnish Nietzsche the title of one of his works, *Joyous Wisdom*,<sup>10</sup> in homage to the Languedocian *Gai Savoir*. One is surprised to note in retrospect how widespread was the interest of German literary groups in the Cathar phenomenon. Even people such as Marx and Engels, both at the antipodes of Nietzschean thought, evoked the crusade against the Albigensians:

In the Middle Ages, a province of the south of France, the Provençal nation, not only had achieved a rich civilization, but also was in the forefront of the growth of Europe. She was the first of all modern nations to have a literary language. Her poetic art served as an unrivaled model for all of the peoples of the Romance tongues, and even for the Germans and for the English. . . . The nation of the south of France, therefore, had acquired not great, but infinite esteem among the family of nations of Europe. (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The New Rhenish Gazette*)

It is quite remarkable seeing both Marx and Nietzsche rendering homage to the people of Aquitania.

In his work *Hitler's Germany* (*L'Allemagne de Hitler*),<sup>11</sup> Claude David states (and he is not the only one to do so): "It is most unlikely that this impassioned negator [Nietzsche] would have approved of Hitler's Germany, any more than that of Bismarck, which he detested. And moreover, the Hitlerians have rarely claimed him as one of their ancestors."

The reader has by now been able to get some fair idea of the many notions borrowed from the philosopher by the Hitlerians, and it is now appropriate that (in order to demolish a legend which has proven hard to kill) we examine Hitler's judgment on the matter. Contrary to what some have said, the Führer appears to have been exceedingly well acquainted with this philosopher: "In the great hall of the library at Linz, one will find the busts of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, our greatest thinkers. The English, the French, and the Americans cannot line up any philosophers of this stature. . . . Nietzsche has gone way beyond the pessimism of Schopenhauer."<sup>12</sup>

For Adolf Hitler, who had adopted the Nietzschean message for his own ends, there was no German philosopher, however great, who had better synthesized the aspirations and the sources of the German way of looking at things than had Nietzsche. These same aspirations and Germanic sources are found once more in Wagner's tetralogy (*The Ring of the Nibelungs*). They will help us to understand better how a myth, so carefully nourished for centuries, was able to explode with brute force in an age when Europeans thought they were civilized.



## 7

## Wagner the Troubadour

THE MASTER OF BAYREUTH AND THE  
PRINCIPAL WAGNERIAN THEMES

RICHARD WAGNER was born in Leipzig in 1813. His mother, having remarried after the death of her first husband, settled in Dresden with her children. According to his own testimony, Richard Wagner as a child knew few restraints:

I grew up without being subject to any authority whatsoever, without any other educators than life, art, and myself. . . . In our world, where the mania for education has gone off the deep end, we no longer receive this gift, save by chance. I lost my father while still an infant. Certain that she would not be chased away, *Norne*<sup>1</sup> slid down into my cradle and granted me this gift which would never leave me.

If, indeed, a gift were granted to this future prodigy, it was that of music.

An intractable, strong-willed, restless, and imaginative child, young Wagner would work only when something excited him. With enthusiasm, he thus learned Greek, Latin, mythology, and ancient history. As an adolescent, he was

fired with revolutionary ideas and smothering in the bourgeois atmosphere of a Germany which had forgotten its history. Goethe was eighty years old, and decadence and mediocrity in the arts were commonplace. In music, comic opera and Italian grand opera were the rage to the extent that even the genius of Beethoven was eclipsed.

But Wagner was marked by the tragic genius. The plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles were revelations to him, as were the tragedies of Shakespeare. Reacting to everything with sensitivity, and moved and impassioned by events which shook him to the very depths of his being, Wagner one day would give this overflowing of enthusiasm and of lyricism its most grandiose expression through music. Aspiring with all his might to an ideal world, his unbridled energy prompted him to write plays at the early age of fifteen. He foresaw a day when man, delivered from the shackles of language, would express himself in a universal tongue. "One evening," he confides, "I heard a symphony of Beethoven. That night, I ran a fever and became ill. After I had recovered, I became a musician."

Wagner, inspired by the drama of Shakespeare and exalted by the overpowering music of Beethoven, confidently picked up the wand capable of making the past come to life again. Initiated into the mystery of high revelation, Wagner discovered in a single instant the world of primordial energies. Henceforth, he held the key to poetry and to music. He then resolved to become a musician, despite some family opposition:

When I thought myself to be sufficiently far along in my studies, I announced my intention to become a musician. I had many a battle to fight, for my family was convinced that my penchant for music was only a passing fancy. I was sixteen at that time, and reading Hoffmann drove me to the wildest kind of mysticism. For days, in a half-wakened state, I had hallucinations during which the tonic, third, and dominant chords appeared to me in person and revealed to me their great significance. Fortunately,



I found for my teacher a knowledgeable musician. I gave the poor fellow a hard time. He felt obliged to explain to me that where I saw magic forms and powers, there were only intervals and chords.

In discovering Weber, an altogether original genius who put into opera the flower of popular song, and *Der Freischütz*, wherein reverberates all of the poetry of the forest primeval, the initiation of the musician was complete.

When he was twenty-three, Wagner became conductor at the Riga Theater in Curland. It was on the shores of the Baltic, that sea pulsating with Nordic and Scandinavian legends, that he began, under the influence of the Italian masters whom he was interpreting, his first major opera, *Rienzi*. The opera is about an impassioned tribune, dreaming of the reestablishment of the austere Roman Republic in the midst of Rome corrupted by the papacy:

An energetic character filled with mighty thought, a noble heart full of love of country, at odds with a brutal and vulgar entourage, having to share his faith with only an enthusiastic and equally patriotic sister; carried for a moment to the heights of power by the masses, then struck down at the zenith of his glory by papal intrigue; betrayed by a self-seeking nobility, banished by that same populace which had acclaimed him, and falling on the threshold of his burning house as the last tribune of Rome.

"This subject was made," notes Edouard Schuré, "to fire the imaginations of youth already aroused by the July Revolution and the Polish insurrection." *Rienzi* was a work of youth, but of great significance. The major Wagnerian themes are already taking shape: the man of inspiration whom the forces of evil try to crush, the spirit of combat and of sacrifice, the cult of the hero and the historical vision of the world. All of these themes are developed further in the works of his maturity.

Constantly at odds with "small-minded" people unable to understand the grandeur of his aspirations, Wagner de-

cided to try his luck in Paris, that radiant center of glory dazzling all Europe. In 1839, at the age of twenty-six, Wagner arrived there. After numerous rebuffs he left the capital, embittered and disappointed; no one had wanted any part of *Rienzi*. But the musician, despite all kinds of hardships, gained from this bohemian existence an invaluable human experience. For one thing, he took stock of his friendships, which turned out to be few in number. His genius was strengthened through misfortune, and where many others would have given up, he found a new energy.

Early in 1842, *Rienzi* was accepted by the Dresden Theater. The work was an immediate success. In his *Flying Dutchman* Wagner had shown himself to be an innovator, breaking as though by magic the chains of civilization which hold us prisoners in a network of conventions. Communing with the collective soul of the nation by means of a distant, inexplicable affinity, Wagner felt himself to have been initiated into a great, invisible community. "It was then," he said, "that I found my deliverance as an artist; it was then that, after a long struggle between the hope within me and the despair from without, I acquired an unshakeable faith in the future of art." This revelation Wagner would find in legend and in the myths in verse of all the ages, from the Nordic sagas to the legendary cycles of the Grail.

It was from this mythical source that Wagner drew his *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal*, thereby linking up again with the ancient tradition. A popular book on the legend of Tannhäuser furnished the material for his opera. He found there the tradition concerning the contest of the singers at Wartburg Castle,<sup>2</sup> and the legend of Lohengrin. Thuringia was, under the hospitable landgraves of the thirteenth century, the meeting place of the most illustrious poet-singers, the Minnesingers. In the middle of the green forests rises the sacred mountain of Venusberg, which, according to popular legend, was inhabited by a dangerous goddess. Once she had been a beneficent divinity, bringing with her joy and



abundance; but then Christianity came, banishing her, cursing her, and forcing her to take refuge within the bowels of the earth. Her name then became assimilated to that of Venus, the goddess of sensual pleasure. She ensnared knights by means of her charms, holding them prisoner in her magic castle. Tannhäuser, the knight-poet, "wanted to see a great marvel" and for several years was Venus' spouse; but then he repented and made amends. Wagner uses this naive theme as a pretext to extol the pure courtly love sung by the troubadours and to condemn sensual love, which identifies with the things of this world. Thus takes shape a whole mythical fresco that situates Wagner very close to medieval poetry, a good part of which is imbued with Cathar ideology.

With *Lohengrin* begins legend in a strict sense, that which reaches back to the ultimate source of legend: the cycle of the adventures of the Holy Grail. The composition of *Tannhäuser* had given Wagner a feeling of liberation, of a catharsis, which had swept him away to a vision far beyond earthly things. It is this realm that Lohengrin, the knight of the Holy Grail, will try to conquer.

The prelude of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, through the ecstatic harmonies of the Holy Grail, carries us off to a celestial abode. The initiate of Montsalvat<sup>3</sup> is deep in prayer. A legion of angels brings into the gathering of the knights the cup of the Holy Grail. The sacred vessel has been entrusted to the care of a Pure, who watches over it.

The drama takes place in the tenth century, somewhere near Angers. The German emperor, Henry the Fowler,<sup>4</sup> has called together the lords of the nation, in order to judge Elsa, daughter of the late Duke of Brabant, who is accused of having killed her brother to seize the crown. The accusation seems about to prevail, when suddenly there appears a knight surrounded by a halo. His silver armor shines magnificently. His barque glides over the water, drawn by a white swan,<sup>5</sup> symbol of esoteric knowledge and of purity.

Lohengrin champions young Elsa. He defeats in combat the perfidious Frederick, who had coveted the throne and was responsible for the vile accusations made against Elsa.

After numerous adventures, Lohengrin kills Frederick under the eyes of Elsa, who has been hoping to learn the young knight's identity. That is a mystery which Lohengrin will unveil at the end of the drama. "In a far-off inaccessible land," he says, "there is, as though suspended between heaven and earth, a castle called Montsalvat. There is a luminous temple which shines there, and there is nothing in all the world to equal it." Thus enraptured, the radiant stranger reveals the mystery of the Holy Grail brought by the angels to the pure and which gives to its initiates faith, valor, and fortitude.

"Now then, all of you," he exclaims boldly, "hear my answer. I am the messenger of the Holy Grail; my father Perceval wears its crown: I, Lohengrin, am its knight!"

The revelation finished, Lohengrin must leave. King, nobles, and the lovely Elsa, all try to keep him from going, but their attempts are in vain; his destiny beckons. The Holy Grail summons its messenger, and the swan has reappeared on the river, towing its frail skiff. Upon seeing Lohengrin leave, Elsa swoons and gives up her spirit.

Such is this drama of ideal love, clothed in the splendid raiment of the knightly myth, whose profundity speaks for itself. Is not Lohengrin's destiny that of the hero, the prophet, the genius in this world, so great in knowledge, but so small in faith? An apprehensive Psyche, Elsa (the human soul) has a presentiment of its ideal in a dream. One day he comes and she asks him: "Who are you? Where do you come from?" "Here I am, what more do you need?" he replies. "Give me proof of who you are." Then he vanishes and returns to his solitude.

Wagner will complete the adventures of the Grail, begun with *Lohengrin*, in the apotheosis of *Parsifal*. Wagner deepened and amplified, through the genius of music, the legen-



dary German epic. More than one myth comes from the same sources as the sacred esotericism of the Grail and the adventures of the knights of the Round Table. His creative power does not stop even there, however, since with *Tristan and Isolde*, a work of maturity, the Master of Bayreuth has given us perhaps his most beautiful musical creation.

Let us briefly consider these works. With *Parsifal* Wagner continues to amplify the Christian esotericism by returning to the most ancient myths. By having us present at the mysteries of the Grail, the composer lets us into the sanctuary by means of the key of pure gold which opens all doors, the key to infinite knowledge.

Parsifal is an adolescent of noble birth whose mother, fearful for him, has concealed from him those things having to do with knighthood. But Parsifal has the instinct of the warrior, and after many adventures, the young man, who more than anything else wants to become a knight, arrives at the domain of the Holy Grail. The death of a swan, killed by one of his arrows, opens the cycle of revelations. During these marvels Parsifal arrives in the midst of a gathering of the knights. King Amfortas (keeper of the Grail) has sinned, and thus he must relinquish the sacred vessel in order that it remain undefiled. A last time, the king raises the cup of blood, and it seems to Parsifal that the air is filled with ineffable music and perfume, which is made of suffering and tenderness.

Parsifal is unaware of the meaning of the Holy Grail. He does not know that the emerald cup is that in which Jesus celebrated the Last Supper and in which Joseph of Arimathea collected the blood of Christ. The Order of the Knights of the Holy Grail was founded by the noble Titurel to preserve the marvelous treasure. His son Amfortas succeeded him, but evil stalked him in the form of the magician Klingsor, creator of the Castle of Perdition, an evil apparition erected against the fortress of God. Klingsor made

Amfortas fall by sending him a woman of irresistible beauty. Seizing a lance intended to kill him, Klingsor wounded Amfortas in the side. Ever since, the king has been afflicted with an incurable malady.

But Parsifal is to replace Amfortas as king of this spiritual realm. The sorceress called forth by Klingsor is named Kundry. Just as Parsifal is about to yield to her beauty, the youth regains possession of himself. In a supreme effort, he frees himself from her embraces. He feels in his heart a burning sensation, something like that felt by Amfortas, the Fisher King, for sensual pleasure is the mother of pain.

Furious at having failed, Klingsor appears in the midst of his intended victims and throws the Holy Lance—the same which had pierced the side of the Saviour—at this fool who would dare to defy him. But the Lance, recognizing one pure in heart, stops in mid-air. Immediately, the magician and the castle, who are but diabolical illusions, come crashing down in a mighty din.

In the last act Kundry, having repented, is received by a hermit. The recluse, a former squire of Titurel, is named Guernimanz. He sees coming toward him a knight wearing black armor. It is Parsifal. Recognized, the hero is crowned king of the Holy Grail after putting on the white tunic of the knights without reproach. Kundry washes the feet of the knight with her tears. A profound peace descends and then echoes the enchantment of Good Friday.

Parsifal, holding the Lance aloft, climbs toward the sanctuary. He touches the king's wound with the point of the Lance, and Amfortas is immediately cured. Taking the emerald cup, Parsifal elevates it before all present. A red glow emanates from it, enveloping the knights with its splendor, inundating them in a baptism of fire. To the strains of a mystical choir, a dove comes down and hovers over the Holy Grail. And on this note ends this symbolic tableau of the Redemption.



The esoteric meaning of *Parsifal* is far from being exhausted, as is apparent to anyone studying its philosophical significance, which unfortunately we cannot go into here.

With the *Mastersingers of Nuremberg* (*Die Meistersinger*) Wagner shows his skill as a satirist. In this work the composer contrasts the scholastic pedantry of the bourgeois chorales to the pure inspiration of the Minnesingers, or troubadours of the twelfth century (those knight-poets so utterly imbued with the Cathar ideal and whose spirit lives on, in a born poet fully of fiery youth). This work is set in sixteenth-century Nuremberg. The knight-singer is Walther von Stolzing, a young lord from Franconia. Only the aging Hans Sachs, a poet in the old tradition and a sage, has recognized in Walther the spark of genius. After having endured the jibes of a number of older artists, the knight-singer will finally triumph, and acclaimed by the throng which decides in his favor, he obtains the crown which hallows poetic genius.

Schuré writes:

Tristan and Isolde! These two names, forever intertwined, recall a world half forgotten today but which was once very much alive. For hundreds of years, they have been borne on men's lips, from the Welsh harp players to the Anglo-Norman minstrels to the French minstrels, from whence they spread throughout Europe. In the same way that the Grail legend symbolized religious knighthood, the mystical conquest of divine love, the legend of Tristan and Isolde represented the worldly knighthood, that is to say, human nobleness placed in the service of earthly love, of the passion love, ruler of hearts. (*Richard Wagner*)

Wagner, dropping the subordinate elements of this courtly romance, goes right to the heart of the myth. While everything separates them (different realms, rivals, great distances, and family hatreds), the young couple is brought together by a fatal destiny symbolized by the love

potion prepared in a gold cup. Henceforth, Tristan and Isolde are united forever, and destiny will sweep them along inexorably to death itself.

*Tristan and Isolde* is a work remarkable for the fullness of its expression, counting for its effectiveness on incomparable poetry and music. The music of *Tristan* mirrors the soul in its eternal becoming.

*The Ring of the Nibelungs* is the most imposing work of Wagner. Fascinated by Nordic legend and in particular by Siegfried, who represents heroic youth, the composer (after having finished *Lohengrin*), conceived the idea of combining in one grandiose work the essential elements of old Germanic myth. The libretto comprising *The Ring of the Nibelungs*, a "scenic celebration for three days and a night," first made its appearance in 1863 as a prologue. But it was the construction of the "Festspielhaus" in Bayreuth, built especially for the performing of Wagner's works under the patronage of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, which insured the fulfillment of the master's dream.

Breathing new life into the ancient heroic legend of the Germans, Wagner brought together this vast ensemble in four succeeding tableaux: *The Rhinegold*, *The Valkyrie*, *Siegfried*, and *The Twilight of the Gods*. The mythical elements of this epic are drawn from the Scandinavian sagas. It is through them alone that we know the legend of the Germans. The two peoples had in common the same deities belonging to the great family of the Aryan gods. Edouard Schuré explains the history of this people:

In their long voyage through the forests of Scythia and across the seas of the North, they lost that ray of light which comes to them from the heavens of Upper Asia and by whose virtue they shone so resplendently in India, Persia and Greece, that brilliant Aurora of mankind. Moody, crude, and barbarous, these gods came to us from Iceland by way of the *Edda*, that chaotic cosmogony, that sinister limbo of a mythology in its early stages.



At the height of this drama, the principal personage of the German epic, Siegfried, concentrates upon himself "the solar radiance of the Aryan gods." Before this splendid figure, the gods themselves grow pale and withdraw into the twilight of the darkening night. We have already called attention to the mythical basis of the *Edda* and its principal divinities, distant relations of the Olympian family: Wotan (Odin), or Zeus; Fricka, or Hera; Thor, or Hephaestus; Freya, or Aphrodite.

Wotan (that northern Zeus, god of combat, and symbol of masculine courage) reigns over this divine world, with his nine daughters (the Valkyries) galloping through the storm, and gathering up the souls of the warriors fallen on the fields of battle. The gods are forever at war with the races of the giants and the dwarfs, constituting the two poles of humanity. We find here an idea exploited by the theoreticians of the north, who see in the pantheism of Germanic mythology an appeal to the cosmic forces of race. We know how this realm of the gods will end, perishing in the flames of a world in revolt and governed by man. It is this that echoes Nietzsche's "God is dead."

In a bold synthesis, Wagner links the heroic tradition of the Germans—grouped about the person of the blond Siegfried, the vanquisher of the dragon Fafnir—with the myth of the Scandinavian gods led by Wotan. Against this backdrop Siegfried and the eternal woman, represented by Brunhilde, stand out as exceptional personages. In the theogony dramatized in this work, we witness the drama of the heros, born of the divine logos, dragging down the gods themselves in their catastrophe. "This is the first time that an attempt was made to put this mythology on a modern stage. Cut short by Christianity, modern science alone has retrieved it from darkness."<sup>6</sup>

*The Rhinegold* (a prelude to the three days comprised by *The Valkyries*, *Siegfried*, and *The Twilight of the Gods*) has for its main subject the battle waged by the divine entities

against their enemies the dwarfs and the giants, united by the tragic bondage of the gold entrusted to the care of the water sprites of the Rhine. In this struggle for the magic ring, the source of evil power, the gods emerge adorned with the luminous glory of the victors.

*The Valkyries* see men delivered from their original fear and taking on sinister powers under the repulsive dwarf Alberic. The gods come down among men in order to help them and teach them wisdom. Brunhilde, the young and proud daughter of Wotan, is the main character in this drama.

*Siegfried*, the story of the ideal Germanic hero, opens the second day. A paragon of virtues, the young man is utterly fearless. Challenging the forces of evil, he kills the dragon Fafnir, taking possession of the famous magic ring. Through Brunhilde, the hero discovers love, but it is the end of the supremacy of the gods. In yielding to earthly passion, the Valkyrie has destroyed the defenses of the fortress of Valhalla; she has unknotted the riddle of the runes: "Twilight of the gods, come forth from the abyss: night of nothingness, enshroud the world!"

In *The Twilight of the Gods*, Siegfried and Brunhilde have become husband and wife. Siegfried is instructed by the Valkyries in the meaning of the sacred runes. The naive hero then falls prey to a diabolical personage, Hagen, who entices him away from Brunhilde by drawing him into a trap. Siegfried dies, struck down by the traitor while the blazing fire lighted by Brunhilde reaches Valhalla itself, which crumbles in the flames. In this epic poem the gods seek to survive by giving birth to human descendants. What Wotan is unaware of is that man, liberated by him, will put an end to divine omnipotence. Thus is accomplished the twilight of the gods.

Each of Wagner's operas is profoundly rich in meaning. *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* evoke the myth of the Grail and the pure blood; with *Tristan and Isolde*, it is love-passion which



counterbalances divine love. *The Mastersingers* exalts the medieval troubadours and beyond that, the Cathar epic. And finally, *The Ring* offers us the spectacle of a cosmogony in its formative stage. It is not surprising that a work such as this, capable of bringing together vigorous artistic inspiration and the greatest spiritual aspirations, fascinated the mad visionary and prophet Adolf Hitler, who saw it as a sequel to Nietzschean revelation. In the light of the philosophical interpretation of the work, we shall see what influence the Master of Bayreuth exercised over Hitler while the latter was still an adolescent. He was eventually exalted to the point of believing himself to be a demigod consecrated to the highest destinies.

#### WAGNER'S WORK AS A PHILOSOPHY

On hearing *Tristan*, one thinks of the inspired genius capable of creating only the unique, and one imagines a Richard Wagner who has assumed the magic qualities of the troubadours in order to sing of Isolde, as Dante sang of Beatrice, and Petrarch of Laura. Indeed, in his turn, Wagner renews in poetry and music all the sham-medieval legends, ending with that of the Grail, which is exalted in *Parsifal* (where the perfect knight is received into that community of the worthy upon whom the spirit descends). But how do Wagner and Nietzsche transpose their vision of the future and the perfect into this medieval French setting? How can *Perceval*, which becomes *Parzival* or *Parsifal* in German, be relocated into Germany if not through the Gay Saber (the *Joy-Bringing Wisdom* of Nietzsche) of the troubadours? The troubadours themselves, versed in the German language after a more or less protracted stay on the other side of the Rhine, and especially the disciples schooled by them received in that region the name of *Minnesingers*, meaning "singers of love" and corresponding to the French term *troubadours*.

It should be noted that the romance of *Perceval*, the perfect knight of the Holy Grail, was inspired by an Aquitanian of the highest rank in the Cathar episcopate, Walther of Aquitania. This romance was spread abroad, according to the poem of the troubadour Guyot de Provins (or de Provence, as the case may be), and translated precisely by a German Templar, Wolfram von Eschenbach. One can easily assimilate (in the light of what we now know) Walther and Wolfram, one belonging to the Church of the Cathars and the other to the Order of the Temple. Both spoke the same language, that of the Grail or of the pure blood. There is a fact which tends to confirm this Catharism-Templarism association: the two poets sojourned at the castle of the Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, the Castle of the Wartburg under the hospitable landgraves of the thirteenth century, which was the rendezvous of the troubadours and *Minnesingers*. The castle was located in the middle of verdant Thuringia, not far from the enchanted mountain of Venusberg (counterpart of the Mount Tabor of the Cathars, Montségur).

Wolfram von Eschenbach understood French well enough to grasp its meaning and became fascinated by the poem of *Perceval*, the text ending with the adventures of the enchanted castle. When Wolfram took it up, he wrote a continuation and brought it to its conclusion, transforming it into the apotheosis of Templarism united to Aquitanian Catharism.

We shall mention one more historical fact which will help the reader to see the Manichaeism-Catharism-Rosicrucianism connection with National Socialism: In the monastery of Loudun founded in 1334, under the liberal administration of Pierre de Foix (whose name does honor to this South of the Cathari), several Carmelite brothers have left their names engraved in decadent Gothic script in a staircase, which has for this reason been named the staircase of the graffiti. Among the names of these brethren we can



distinguish that of Brother Guyot,<sup>7</sup> who adds to his signature, in order to distinguish it from the other graffiti, *the heraldic rose overlaid with the swastika*. Brother Guyot was without doubt a Rosicrucian-Templar, a member of the Albigensian Church, whom we can find again in the Grail legend under the name of the knight Kyot, Duke of Catalonia. This is the same Brother Guyot who wrote the famous *Cathar Bible* (which cannot find enough praise for the Order of the Temple, while vilifying all other religious orders). We can conclude from this that the legend of Parsifal is a pure work of Templar Catharism, just as is the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, which hallows this union.

Let us note that the romance of *Lancelot* (in Latin *ancel-lus* means "servant of God") is closely related to the Grail romances. Here again, we find an affiliate of the Temple: Walter Map (the famous chaplain of Henry II) wrote *Lancelot* in the Saxon tongue. Arthurian legend has its source in a distant past; Arthur, King of Brittany, is related to an old Aryan conqueror of mythological times, and the principal elements of the myth would seem to be of an Eastern origin. One is struck by several analogies. For example, the yearly voyage of the Sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac and the renewing of life represented by the sign of the Water Bearer suggest the idea of the quest of the Grail undertaken by the knights of the Round Table, the twelve signs of the Zodiac being the worshipers of the Sun who set out on the same quest as the Sun himself.

To come back to Catharism and Albigensianism, it should be remembered that during the second half of the twelfth century, Cathar doctrine marched triumphantly across the civilized world. Knighthood was in flower, and the Aquitanian knights were equally at home in the Holy Land and in Tripolitania, which was a Romanic province. The moral decay of the Church contributed considerably to this anti-pontifical movement in Aquitania. When an Albigensian missionary preached, the crowds came running and listened to

him with fervor. But were a Roman priest to speak, he was asked ironically how he dared spread the word of God. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux could say of the Cathars: "There are certainly no more Christian sermons than theirs and their ways were pure." At this time, Aquitania was solidly on the side of Catharism. In the mighty battle shaping up between the main forces of the West and the ecclesiastical tyranny of those times, Albigensians, Templars, and Ghibelines made common cause against the enemy.

The work of Wagner, indeed, could be for us the vision of the last troubadour looking down from on high, upon unconscious obtuseness. Three religious elements stand out in *Tristan*: (1) the old Druidic element, in King Mark, son of Meinchawn; (2) the orthodox belief inclining toward Albigensianism, personified by the blond Essylt (Isolde), accepting with hesitation and repugnance the Druidic element; (3) Tristan, that is to say, Albigensian proselytism.

As concerns the first element, let us recall that Languedoc was, with Armorica (which explains the legend of Lancelot), the chosen land of the Druids, the land where the mixture of Celts and of Aquitainians had produced a race of pure and unselfish men of blue eyes and brown hair. Thus the legends of King Arthur became fused with those of the troubadours. In the *Parsifal* of Kyot, the troubadour, one finds our Templars at Montségur, standing before the pure, warlike virgin Esclarmonde de Foix. Germany was also visited many times, most often under the pretext of going on pilgrimages. Proofs are not lacking on this subject and one can find them in Schmidt's *History of the Cathars and Albigenses*. The reigns of Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II made relations even easier and consequently more frequent. The songs of the Minnesingers, which merely reproduce Provençal ideas or translate Provençal compositions, help us recognize in these poems of the North the Cathar initiations and even more so, the Manichaean initiations. What better example of this Manichaeanism is there than that of



those Perfects, who sacrificed all the joys of family life and consecrated themselves to a wandering life, full of privation (the life of the troubadours). The latter were the masters or fathers, as the apostles called Jesus Christ. We can conclude that the Albigenians, in order to preserve the purity of their Manichaeian faith, amidst the blasts of the pyres which would engulf them, created the "Gay Saber."

Toulouse was the major center for learning how to read and relate Cathar legends so that the troubadours of all the countries could propagate them along the way, and especially by means of the Courts of Love, send news concerning the vicissitudes of the Inquisition. Let us be careful not to forget that the Holy Grail (as Francis Rolt-Wheeler [*Mystic Gleams from the Holy Grail*] has noted) is the symbol of the highest emotion of Christianity. The quest for the Grail is the symbol of Christian aspiration at the summit of its desiring. The cross is the symbol of obedience, and the Holy Grail is the symbol of Christian freedom: Tradition has it that the first vision of the Grail was granted to the apostles by Christ Himself in the course of his initiatory teaching, during the period between His Resurrection and His Ascension. This explains why we find elements of the first period of Christianity (and even, we should not hesitate to say, pre-Christian), that is to say, Gnostic, mixed in with the legend of the bard Merlin, the secrets of early Druidism, and the early knighthood of King Arthur in the cycle of the adventures of the Holy Grail. It all fits together: The troubadours and minstrels were the voice of this sentiment in the thought of all Europe, especially in France and Germany.

On reading these legends, we see in our mind's eye the progression of images unfolding, and we get a better idea of the musical esotericism of Wagner who condenses the thematic material. The divine is accessible, one might say, to the initiate, the profane at the material level, and the lyric at the level of musical thought.

We find three governing ideas behind Wagner's work:

(1) the vassalage of gold, immortally expressed in the sublime measures of *The Rhinegold*; (2) the degeneration of the peoples of the West (an old theme, as we have seen) is due to the influence of the East and the vices of the priest-ridden religion (in contrast to the Pures, who are the Cathars and Templars); (3) lastly, the regeneration of man through vegetarianism (a principle to which Hitler subscribed during his entire life) and through art (considered as the sole mediator between man and God).

Wagner, like the troubadours of Aquitania, wanted his work to be essentially esoteric. We can mention Wolfram's *Wächter-Lieder*,<sup>8</sup> one of which was singled out for immortalization,<sup>9</sup> without forgetting, however, the Manichaeism of this same Wolfram who, like the Persians, sang of the stone fallen from Heaven. The origin of this stone is assuredly the same as that of the East; it is attributed to Lucifer's fall following his revolt (literally, "the light-bearing angel"). When the rebellious angel was thrown into the abyss, an emerald from his crown fell to earth. The emerald, according to the symbolism of precious stones, is the stone of prophecy.<sup>10</sup> According to the legend, it is from this gem, cut in the shape of a vase with 144 facets (the square of twelve being the number of fulfillment or of plenitude), that the Grail was created, for all of this concerns the same object.

This helps to explain why the more a country becomes civilized, the more its impressions of the world as it once may have been, its native myths, become blurred. Wagner wanted to bring back to life this bygone age. With this in mind, his scenes take place in an enchanted forest. He wanted to make his public think and force it to link up with the past. Everything in Wagner has its purpose, and here his work affronts eternity. For this composer, to deliberately brush legend aside is to ignore the most essential of man's knowledge.

Unfortunately for the scholar, Cathar and Templar legend



does not reveal all the sources. If we have taken into account all available information on the subject, the fact remains that the poetic works of the troubadours were systematically destroyed or carried off to enrich the Vatican's secret library. People no longer read the poetry of the troubadours because they find it too tedious. The apparent sameness of Albigenian verse rebuffs the scholar.

But for Wagner, who idealized the triumph of the spirit and salvation for all, there is not a contest between good and evil, but a veritable chasm which will be filled up by the rule of God. We find ourselves here before a basic Manichaeism, transcended by a superior world. It would be fair to say that for Wagner, as for the Cathars, religious inspiration consisted only of art, the real bridge between the human and the divine.

But we ask, what was the purpose of this nineteenth-century actualization of Templarism and Catharism at the time Wagner was composing his works? All through this Cathar and Templar legend the goal remains ever in sight: the establishing of an imperial Messiah (whom the Templars thought they had indeed found in Frederick II Hohenstaufen, until he was struck down by the Church which had uncovered his plans). It is certain that the confusion between Catharism, Templarism, and the imperial party or Ghibelline faction occurred after the Council of Vienna in 1311.

This merging of the occult forces took place in the south, in Aquitania, that old land of the Druids. The latter definitely left behind them evidence of their having once been there, were this only their spiritual impact upon the region. In fact, these men did not come to teach a religion, but a philosophical outlook on the world, a *Weltanschauung*, as the Germans would say. At the time of their arrival in Gaul, the Druids brought with them the gamma cross<sup>11</sup> to oppose the nascent materialism, which they detested. It is not surprising that it is in the Pyrenees, a region much frequented



(Photo Yan)

(PLATE 1) Montségur, sun temple of the Cathars of Aquitaine





(PLATE 2) Inside court of Montségur castle

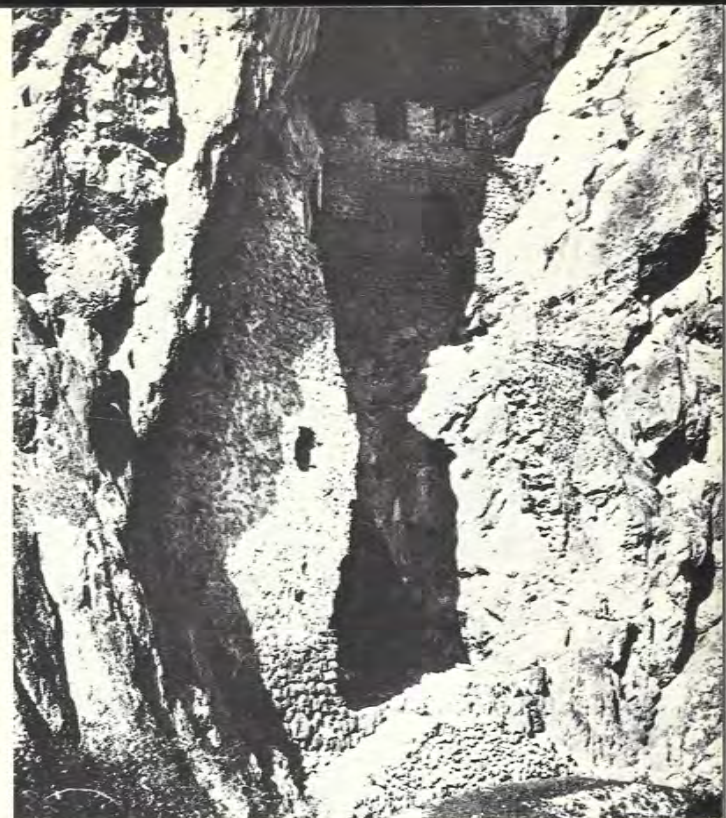
(Author's coll.)



(PLATE 3) Yugoslavian Catharo-Bogomil stele with symbolic figures

(Photo by Toso Dabac)

(PLATE 4) Entrance to fortified grotto of Bouan, last refuge of the Cathars after the fall of Montségur (Archives Stock)



(PLATE 5) The "Mysterious Mission" . . . Otto Rahn in the grottoes of Orinolac. (Archives Stock)

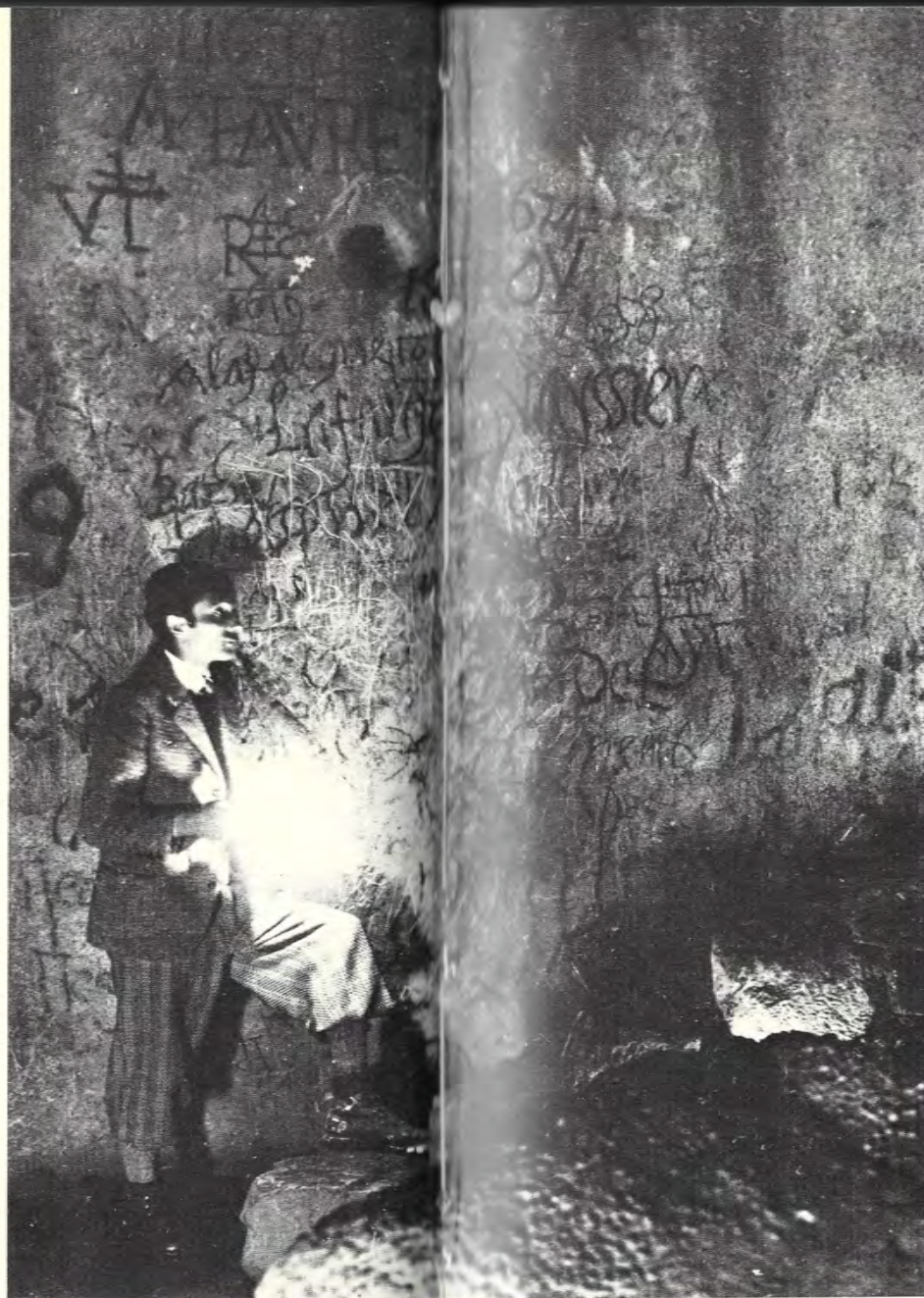






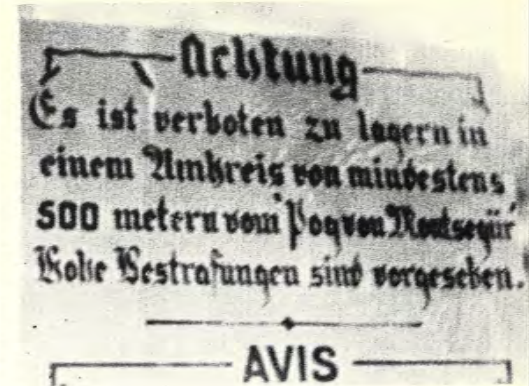
(Author's coll.)

(PLATE 6) Stele erected at Montségur by the Société des études cathares, in memory of the 300 Albigensians burnt at the stake March 16, 1244



(Archives Stock)

(PLATE 7) Young Otto Rahn in the "cathedral" of Lombrives. It is possible that the "Grail-stone" was hidden there



(Author's coll.)

(PLATE 8) Notice for the numerous German "tourists" making their "pilgrimage" at Montségur





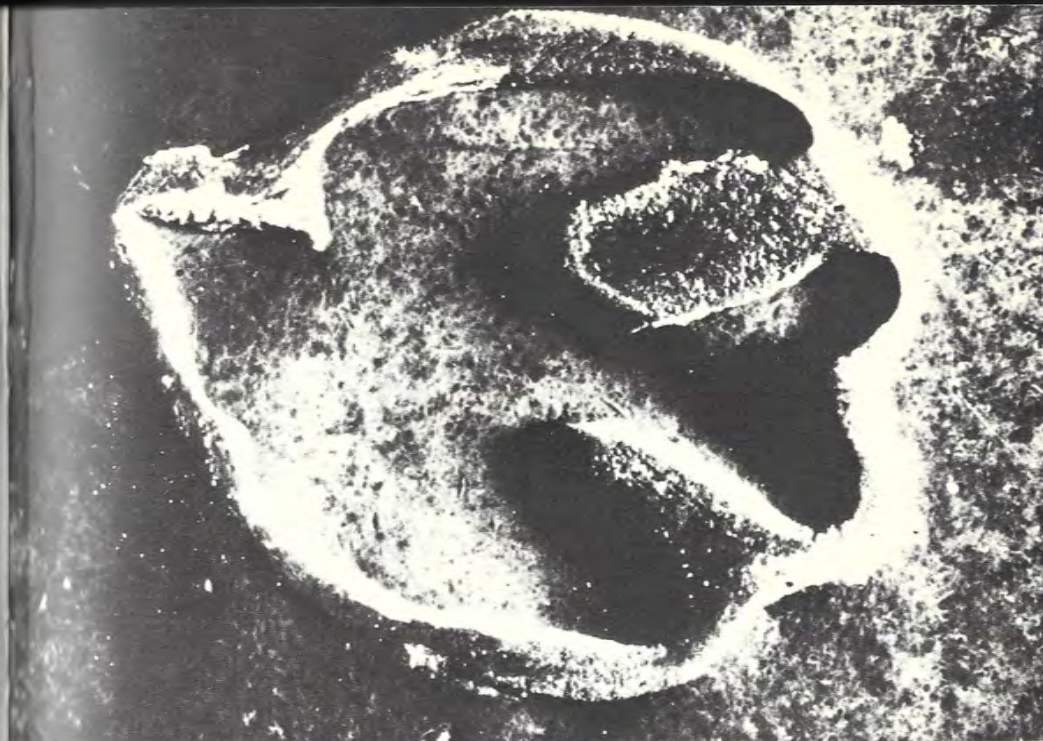
(Keystone Photo)

(PLATE 9) Torchlight ceremony under the Third Reich: nostalgia for the Middle Ages

Adolf Hitler: official portrait  
(Photo R. Viollet)



Alfred Rosenberg: Party Philosopher of the Third Reich and friend of Otto Rahn  
(Photo R. Viollet)

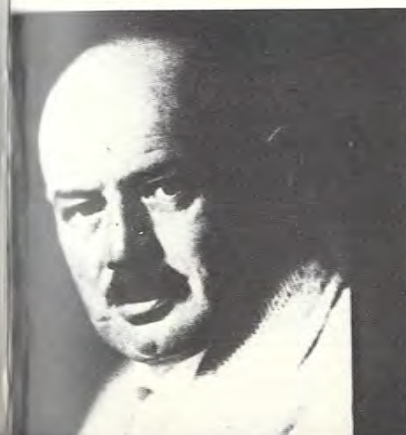


(Photo Yan)

(PLATE 13) Cathar dove of Ussat. Found by M. Gadal and now at the Rosicrucian Museum of Ussat (Ariège). The dove is conventionally the symbol of the Holy Spirit

(PLATE 14) The myth realized

Dietrich Eckardt, one of the "Initiators" of Hitler: esotericism in the service of the "Race"  
(Photo R. Viollet)





by the Celts, that we find the largest number of ancient gammadia.

Without getting into a study of the gammadion, we note that this emblem disappears altogether at certain times in our history, only to reappear with renewed vigor. It was unknown to ancient Rome at the very time that it was thriving in northeastern Europe. When the Roman Empire collapsed, it was the swastika which marched victoriously across the ancient world, as did also the Celtic cross (or circle barred with a cross).

Likewise, when the Templars joined forces with the Cathars in the Order of the Holy Grail, it was agreed that in the place of the insignia of the Temple, which was a cross, all concerned would adopt henceforth the symbolic signs of the dove, the Celtic cross, and the swastika.<sup>12</sup>

It would appear that symbols, even when they disappear momentarily, continue to live in the subconscious of the peoples who have been their promoters. This is true in the case of the swastika, an emblem which reappeared with violence first in the Thule Society, and then in National Socialism. We can, therefore, consider Richard Wagner as having been a sort of catalyzer in the resurgence of this "sacred" symbol called the gamma cross. Indeed, the works of the Master of Bayreuth gave it the impetus necessary for its resurgence with all its strength of old. The only interpreter who has really fathomed the meaning of Wagner's works, Guido von List, sees in the swastika the symbol of an "eternal future" as well as the sign of Aryan belief.

The gamma cross in this domain cannot fool us. The occult currents of history are stronger than our powers of reason; they reveal themselves at certain times only to the initiate or to those who seek. We can only deplore the gulf which separates the Middle Ages from the eighteenth century. This was the worst of gulfs, for the medieval Catholic Church had sacked and destroyed entire treasures of knowledge, learning, and wisdom, through the most crass igno-



(Photo Snark)

(PLATE 15) The swastika as solar wheel. Paris under the Nazi Occupation, Summer 1940

(Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris — Editions Robert Laffont)

(PLATE 16) A fourteenth-century French manuscript depicts the Holy Grail, attended by two angels, appearing to the Knights of the Round Table





rance. It was easy for ignorance to replace this entire edifice by the vision of Hell, thereby turning back man's spiritual evolution for centuries to come and encouraging the birth of the "shameful diseases of history," the last of which was Nazism.

#### HITLER'S INTERPRETATION OF WAGNER

It all began at the opera in Linz, on an evening of November 1906. Adolf Hitler and his friend Kubizek had just heard Richard Wagner's *Rienzi*.<sup>13</sup>

After the performance they strode through the silent streets. Hitler did not say a word. They kept on walking until they had left the city:

Adolf continued to climb, as though attracted by an irresistible force. When we got to the top, the fog had disappeared. Above our heads, the stars shone brilliantly in a cloudless sky. Adolf now turned to me and gripped both my hands and held them tight. It was a gesture I had never seen him make before. I felt how deeply moved he was. His eyes shone with excitement. The words did not come forth with their usual ease, but in choppy bursts; he was hoarse. I could tell from his voice how shaken he was.

Then the words began to flow. I had never before heard him speak, nor would I ever again, as he did that night. Standing there under the stars, we felt as if we might be the only beings in the world.

I recall that he painted a delirious future for himself and the German people.

Until now, I had always thought that my friend wanted to be an artist or an architect. But there was no longer any question. He spoke to me of more lofty ambitions, which I did not fully understand, particularly since in my opinion no vocation could surpass that of the artist. He spoke to me of a mandate, which the people would one day give to him, to lead them out of servitude and raise them up to freedom.<sup>14</sup>

It was three in the morning, when the two young men came back to town:

We parted in front of my parents' house, and I was astonished to see that Hitler did not head for his apartment but instead, went back in the direction of the mountain.

"Where do you think you're going?" I asked him, astonished.

"I want to be alone," he replied briefly.

I stood there for some time, until his black cloak had disappeared into the night.<sup>15</sup>

According to Jacques Ploncard d'Assac,<sup>16</sup> one day, a good bit later, Hitler told Mme. Wagner about his *Rienzi* experience and finished with the observation: "It was there that it all began."

So it was that Wagner, by the power of his musical sorcery and his gift for evoking the past, aroused in young Hitler an emotion so intense that it would be with him forever. The Master of Bayreuth had awakened the adolescent to mysterious, destructive forces which shook his entire being, and which were to turn the world upside down.

Like *Rienzi*, Hitler saw himself as prophet and tribune of the masses, preaching a new conception of the world and of man. In *Mein Kampf* he would write:

The force which has set in motion the great avalanches of history, whether in the domain of politics or religion, has from time immemorial been one thing only: the magic power of words. . . . Only a storm of fiery passion can change the destiny of nations, but the only person who can unleash the passion is he who carries it within himself.

In Wagner's works, it was the initiate, the demiurge, whose *Weltanschauung*, built on the theories of the harmonies of the worlds, seduced Hitler. Kubizek noted that, as far back as 1906, his friend was drawn to the world of the German legends on which the Ring was based:

He thought about it unceasingly, and he felt himself made for it. He believed himself to be a hero of Germanic antiquity. A life full of daring exploits would lead him to the paradise of Valhalla, where he would become one of the demigods whom he worshiped. This romantic aspect of Adolf Hitler is important for, during his



entire life, he believed in the Germanic world. It was for him almost a religion. (*The Young Hitler I Knew*)

The obscure and remote ages took on for him an intense meaning. His dreams became reality. "Wagner, had he lived, would have been able to write an opera based on the life of Adolf Hitler, and one can almost hear the harmonies he would have used."<sup>17</sup> Hitler was intimately acquainted with Wagner's works and often went about whistling their themes. Nothing could have kept him away from the Bayreuth Festival, which he followed each year with keen interest. Imbued with the Wagnerian myths, Hitler reflected on all these symbols, starting with the Grail, whose meaning in terms of Catharism was no more lost on him than was the Manichaeism outlook of the Wagnerian operas, which was entirely consistent with his own view of things. Thus *Tristan and Isolde*, crowning achievement of the courtly love sung by the troubadours is for Hitler Wagner's masterpiece.

He confided to intimates:

Opera as an art owes to Wagner everything it is today. The great singers who have left a mark made their reputations as interpreters of Wagner. . . . At the beginning of the century, there were those who were called Wagnerians. For the others, there wasn't any name. . . . The ten days of the Bayreuth season were always the most blessed times of my existence. And I already rejoice at the thought that one day I shall be able to continue this pilgrimage.<sup>18</sup>

In order to grasp properly the mystical and the sacred which Hitler associated with Wagner's works, we must remember that to him the Bayreuth spectacle had an esoteric philosophical meaning which was inaccessible to the masses:

The tradition of the Olympic games has gone on for almost a thousand years. That proceeds, it seems to me, from a *mystery* comparable to that which is at the origin of Bayreuth. Man feels the need to come out of himself, to commune with an idea which

is beyond his comprehension. The Party Congress answers the same need; that is why for hundreds of years to come, men will come from everywhere in the world to renew themselves, once a year, in the marvelous atmosphere of Nuremberg. (*Hitler's Table Talk*)

And there are other passages in which he reveals to us in part his secret thoughts:

When I listen to Wagner, I feel as though I am hearing the rhythms of an earlier world. It is my guess that one day science will find, in the wavelengths set in motion by the *Rhinegold*, secret connections with the order of the world. . . . The observation of the world perceived by the senses precedes knowledge brought forth by the exact sciences as well as by philosophy. It is to the extent that sensory knowledge approaches truth, that it has significance. (*Ibid.*)

The influence of Wagner was a decisive factor in the formation of Hitler's outlook, and it is no accident that the Führer chose Nuremberg, city of the mastersingers, as the site of the Nazi pageants. It was Jacques Bainville who noted "this Wagnerian and Nietzschean hoodoo"<sup>19</sup> of the Hitlerian Congresses, this setting of the "cathedrals of light." Even in the public speeches of Hitler, we find traces of the myths dear to the Master of Bayreuth. Thus the "tragic bondage of gold," this "cursed metal," is unequivocally condemned as being the endowment of "Jewish materialism." "If in this war, it turns out that gold fights work, capital fights the peoples, and reaction fights the progress of humanity, then work, peoples, and progress will win."<sup>20</sup>

The dropping of the gold standard in 1933 had already shown this determination to break with the past: "We have devalued gold; it lies in our cellars and no longer has any value whatsoever." (Adolf Hitler)

Throughout his political career, Hitler continually showed his concern for Wagner's family, especially for the composer's grandson Siegfried Wagner, and his wife Winifried. In Hermann Rauschning's book *Hitler Speaks*,<sup>21</sup>



which is a mine of information on Hitler's interpretation of Wagner, we are told that "Hitler refused to admit that he [Hitler] had any precursors, the only exception being Richard Wagner."

Likewise, Hitler was convinced that he alone understood Wagner. "He was not just thinking about Wagner's musical genius, but about the entire Wagnerian view of Germanic culture, which was a revolutionary doctrine right down to the smallest detail." (*Ibid.*) Rauschning believes that Wagner, continuator of the neo-Catharism of the troubadours, was the major factor in Hitler's decision to become a vegetarian, for "Wagner attributed the decline of our culture, to a great extent, to our eating of meat." Hitler "abstained from meat, alcohol, and tobacco, which he considered vile, not only for reasons of health, but as a matter of conviction. Unfortunately, the world was not yet ready for a total purification." (*Ibid.*)

Wagner—this modern troubadour—had had the revelation, he had heralded the tragic destiny of the Germans. He was not only a musician and a poet, but *the greatest prophetic figure* the German people had ever had. Hitler had happened early upon Wagner's doctrines, whether by pure luck, or by predestination. With an exaltation bordering on the morbid, he discovered that everything he had read of this great mind echoed intuitive ideas which lay dormant, so to speak, in the depths of his own consciousness.<sup>22</sup>

But it will be the Grail myth, the focal point of Wagnerian neo-Catharism, that Hitler will see as the most important symbol in which to coalesce his own view of the world.

Should the masses be allowed to follow their own inclinations, or should we stop them? *Should we create an elite of real initiates? An order? A religious brotherhood of templars to guard the Holy Grail, the august vessel containing the pure blood?*<sup>23</sup>

We have moreover to understand *Parsifal* in a different way than the usual interpretation, such as that given for example by poor old Wolzogen. Behind the polite exterior, the sacristy bric-

a-brac, the pseudo-Christian claptrap weirdness of Good Friday, you can sense something profound and majestic. It's not the religion of pity, which you find glorified there according to the neo-Christian gospel of Schopenhauer; it's the cult of the noble and precious blood, of the pure, radiant gem around which has gathered the Brotherhood of the Valiant and the Wise. King Amfortas suffers from an incurable illness: the corruption of his blood. Parsifal, the unworldly but pure hero, has to choose between the delights of Klingsor's garden, which symbolizes the *perversions of corrupt civilization and the austere life of the knights, who watch over the pure blood (the mystical source of all life)*. *We are part of this same drama. All of us are afflicted by this disease of the blood, all of us have been stained by racial contamination. Where can we find the cure, and the expiation? . . . The eternal life obtained through the Grail is reserved only to those whose blood is pure, only to the noble. I am thoroughly familiar with Wagner's thought. At different times in my life, I always come back to him. Only a new aristocracy can secure for us the blessings of a new culture.* (*Ibid.*)

Here we get right to the heart of Hitlerian thinking in its lesser known aspects. Indeed, the Führer confided to Rauschning:

Naturally, I am as aware as all your intellectuals, your founts of knowledge, that there is no such thing as race in the scientific sense of the word . . . Well, I am a politician, and as such, I also need something enabling me to do away with the established order of things in the world and *to overcome history by destroying it*. Do you understand what I'm getting at? *The world must be freed from its historical past*. The nations are the raw materials of man's history. I must brew these nations and fashion them into something more noble, if I want to put an end to the chaos of a historical past that has become absurd. To accomplish this task, the notion of race is most useful. It does away with old ideas and opens possibilities for new combinations. Taking as its starting point the principle of "nation," France pushed its great revolution beyond its frontiers. With the notion of race, National Socialism will use its own revolution *for the establishing of a new world order*.<sup>24</sup>



# 8

## The Secret Origins of Nazism

### THE ESOTERIC SOCIETIES: GERMAN FREEMASONRY AND THEOSOPHY

IN HITLER'S OBSERVATIONS, published by Hermann Rauschning under the title *Hitler Speaks* and which had a huge success in France, England, and the United States in the years just preceding the war, one can rediscover the important role played by German Freemasonry as a model for esoteric structuring of the Nazi Party.

Rauschning had expressed his astonishment at the Führer's having borrowed anything whatsoever from Freemasonry. Hitler replied:

What is dangerous about those people is the secrecy of their sect, and it is precisely that which I have borrowed from them. They comprise a sort of ecclesiastical aristocracy. They acknowledge each other by special signs. They have developed an esoteric doctrine which is not formulated in logical terms, but in symbols which are only little by little revealed to the initiate. Can't you see that our Party ought to be constituted exactly like their sect?<sup>1</sup>

We have in the preceding chapters paid particular attention to the very special character of that branch of Free-

masonry to which belonged the Illuminated Ones of Bavaria and which should in no way be compared with the true F.:M.: which for convenience we shall refer to as "humanitarian Freemasonry." It was of the latter that Hitler was speaking, and he was not about to spare it his hate.

Thus it was that in 1942 Goering signed the order for active combat "against Jews, Freemasons, and the other ideological forces," adversaries of the Third Reich. This order was followed, moreover, by the creation of special staff groups (*Einsatzstäbe*) whose role was the confiscation and transfer of Masonic properties. This pillage in the grand manner was to enable Professor Alfred Rosenberg's services to organize the numerous Masonic Expositions subsequently seen throughout Europe. It should be added that the Rotary Club did not escape this razing, nor did the countless archives and libraries whose holdings the Nazi writers intended to draw upon in order to "reinvent" the history of political ideas in Europe.

Almost a century and a half earlier, by his edict of 1798, Frederick William II of Prussia had forbidden secret societies, with the exception of the "old-Prussian" lodges. Hitler was to imitate his predecessor; indeed, the interdict of 1942 did not aim at the "old-Prussian" lodges whose ideal, from the beginning of the twentieth century, bore no small resemblance to Nazi thought.

The gulf between these racist lodges and the other Masonic brotherhoods was such that a member of the former was forbidden to belong to the humanitarian Masonry. Thus the Johannite Prussian order, which had as its spiritual ideal the founding of an ultranationalist and racist state, did not allow Jews to be members.

This specifically Germanic character of the German F.:M.: might well astonish those who think of this international philosophical movement, which is F.:M.: as a single monolith. It should be noted that this movement has from its beginnings been characterized by its diversity.



What makes the study of F. . M. . in Germany a passionately interesting one is that German Freemasonry differs considerably from the democratic and religious ideals of the Freemasonry movement in general. For, not satisfied with being antidemocratic, the Johannite order preached, among other things, a dogmatic Christianity, that is to say, a Gnostic one.

The attempt to formulate a dogmatic Christianity seemed close to being realized with the coming to power of the masters of the Third Reich. Proof of such an attempt is found in Paul Ernst's *A Credo (Eine Credo)* published in Munich in 1935, a work of prime significance for what it tells us about the elaboration of a racist Gnosis:

Christian doctrine includes the dogma of the Holy Spirit. From time immemorial and among all the peoples of Christendom, there has been constantly reaffirmed this idea of a third empire, which would follow that of the Son: the Empire of the Holy Spirit. Likewise today, one hears, however indistinctly, in the nostalgia for the German god, the name "Third Reich." . . . Would it be possible for humanity to find a purely spiritual religion, one which would no longer depend on body, expression or form, one which would be exclusively feeling? <sup>2</sup>

Thus, contrary to pseudohistorical explanations, which see in the Third Reich the continuation of the reichs of Bismarck and William II, the Germany of Adolf Hitler appeared in every way (in the eyes of its founders and of its initiates) to be the third epoch of the human species. This analysis, which seems to have escaped all those who have heretofore written on the Third Reich, is found in the observations of Hitler himself: "There was antiquity. Now there is our movement. Between the two, the middle period of humanity, the Middle Ages, which have continued up to the present and which we are going to close." <sup>3</sup>

Continuing our examination of the different esoteric groups in Germany, we find that the struggle between the

two aforementioned forms of F. . M. . was, in addition, characterized by one between white magic and black magic. The latter was none other than a powerful and well-organized theosophy <sup>4</sup> intimately associated with the Thule Group, where we have noted the presence of Haushofer, Hess, and Hitler. The same theosophy added to the neo-Pagan magic a whole oriental outlook, to the end of giving the impression of having achieved a luciferian (luminous) synthesis between East and West. <sup>5</sup>

The doctrines of theosophy draw their inspiration from the Sanskrit *Vedas*, in lieu of Hebrew scripture. <sup>6</sup> It was an American, Madame Blavatsky (related on her mother's side to the high Russian nobility) who founded on November 17, 1875, in New York City, the first theosophic society.

In its theology, theosophy is pantheistic. God is all, and all is God. If we can believe Colonel H. S. Olcott (1832-1907), one of the first theosophists, <sup>7</sup> the leaders of the cult were endowed with supernormal powers (the same mediumistic traits which will be manifest in Adolf Hitler). These same phenomena are stressed in all works on theosophy and consist principally in communicating over distances by the initiate.

Certain authors, such as René Alleau in his *Hitler et les sociétés secrètes*, <sup>8</sup> have traced the origin of Hitler's mediumistic gifts to his initiation by his faithful disciple Rudolf Hess. Alleau believes that it may have been at Landsberg, during their imprisonment following the abortive Munich putsch, that Hess (a German born at Alexandria, Egypt) introduced Hitler to the practices of occultism. Our viewpoint is that Hitler was already familiar with such practices through his earlier mystical experiences and his involvement with the Thule Society. There is, moreover, every reason to believe that he was familiar with the Gnostic declaration made by the theosophists in 1908 and which bears a striking resemblance to the Nazi *Credo* of Paul Ernst:



There is among our dogma one to which I shall draw particular attention: the dogma of feminine salvation. The work of the Father has been accomplished, that of the Son, as well. There remains that of the Spirit, which alone is capable of bringing about the final salvation of man on earth and thereby, of laying the way for the reconstitution of the Spirit. Now the Spirit, the Paraclete (as the Cathari called him), corresponds to what the divine partakes of a feminine nature, and our teachings state explicitly that this is the only facet of the godhead which is truly accessible to our reason. What will be in fact the nature of this new and not-too-far-distant Messiah? <sup>9</sup>

The new imperial Messiah was to be Adolf Hitler, the master of the Third Reich, an adept in that black magic in which he had very early been initiated. It is of no real importance to determine if this was in fact the goal of the theosophical groups of that time, or if their mission found itself perverted by the emergent National Socialism. The prime lesson to be learned is that the practice of occultism and magic is fraught with danger and, therefore, not to be entrusted to just anyone. At this point, it can be stated with some certainty that the first victim of Nazism was Rudolf Steiner who was, so to speak, attuned to those theosophic disciples who were members of the Thule Society.

We are not interested at this juncture in knowing whether Steiner's outlook mirrored more or less accurately the theosophical currents of that time. We do believe, however, that as in the case of Freemasonry, there existed from the early 1900s among the German theosophists two radically opposed outlooks: one racist and aggressive (opposed to the Hebrew *Kabbala*) and one humanitarian (of which the anthroposophist Steiner was leader). The latter group, which as of this writing still exists in Europe, states that there exists both a white and a black form of occult investigation.

The Steinerians belong to the white branch of magic. The latter profess that the neo-Pagan societies come from the

subterranean world of Evil, from the malefic pole, whose leaders are unknown. It seems that René Guénon, in his well-known work *Theosophism, the History of a pseudo-religion* (*Le Théosophisme, histoire d'une pseudo-religion*, 1921), had this in mind when he wrote: "But is there not really behind all of these movements something else to be feared, of which their own leaders are perhaps quite unaware, a force of which ultimately they are but the unwitting tools?"

The struggle between the black magic of the neo-Pagan Nazi philosophy and the white magic (or anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is reflected in the words of one initiate as reported by no one less than Rauschning:

One day, when the Führer was in a particularly cordial mood, a woman of his entourage who had a sense of timing ventured to give him a warning:—"My Führer," she said, "don't choose black magic. You still have, at this moment, the choice between white magic and black magic. But from the moment when you will have decided in favor of black magic, your destiny will henceforth be subject to it. Don't choose the low road of rapid and facile success. There is still open to you the road leading to the empire of the pure spirits. Don't let yourself be detoured from this high road by creatures mired in the mud who are stealing from you your creative strength."

And Rauschning, who could make no sense out of such words (a fact which lends credence to his testimony), continues:

This intelligent woman was expressing, as best she knew how, the apprehensions which every person felt who came into contact with Hitler: Everyone realized that he (Hitler) was abandoning himself to malefic influences of which he was no longer the master.

And we might add: "And for good reason!"

The war between Steinerian white magic and Hitlerian



black magic took place well before the Nazis came to power: This shows to what extent anthroposophy was considered a serious danger by its adversaries. It is a fact that Europe was altogether unaware of this struggle: This should serve as a warning to those simple minds and those practitioners of historical science who refuse, even now, to acknowledge the existence of occult forces waging war from the shadows. One can draw one's own conclusions in the case of contemporary theosophy for what really strikes the observer of this ideological phenomenon; that the first SA (storm trooper) formations used uncommon violence in breaking up meetings of the Steinerian theosophers. Death threats (which seem to have been carried out in the case of those who remained stubborn, following the taking of power by the Hitlerians) and raids against the Steinerian gatherings became more frequent, culminating in the burning on New Year's Eve (1922-1923) of the sect's headquarters, the Goetheaneum which Steiner had built in Dornach, Switzerland. As for Steiner—his supporters scattered, his records burned, and he himself utterly helpless in the face of the unmitigating hate shown him—he died brokenhearted in 1925.

But the struggle between these two magics was not to stop there. It appears that the members of the White Rose,<sup>10</sup> the resistance group whose network was finally smashed by the Gestapo during the war, was an offshoot of the Steinerian movement. (The Rose, we should recall, is the symbol of knowledge; hence chosen by the Rosicrucian Gnostics).

A resistance group quite different from the others was that whose young members were beheaded at Moabit Prison. This group, put to death at the same time as the conspirators behind the abortive July 20, 1944, bomb plot against Hitler's life, counted among its members the young son of the principal initiator of Hitler, Karl Haushofer.<sup>11</sup>

Albrecht Haushofer, before perishing under the heads-

man's axe, left a poem whose beauty and profoundness might serve as a final commentary on this struggle:

*For my father, Fate had spoken  
Once more the task of  
Pushing the demon back into his cell  
My father broke the seal  
He did not feel the breath of the Evil One  
He loosed the Evil One on the world.*

### THE RACIST GROUPS

Among the secret societies burgeoning in Germany immediately after World War I and to whose variety we have already called the reader's attention, there are some which are more typically representative of what became the Nazi Gnosis. Among these, the Vril Society and the Thule Society, otherwise known as the *Thule Gesellschaft*, seem most clearly to have given birth to the Hitler movement.

At the earliest beginnings of the Vril Society,<sup>12</sup> or Lodge of Light, we find the name of the French writer Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890). Jacolliot drew his inspiration from various esoteric writers including Swedenborg, the Swedish mystic; Jacob Boehme, the celebrated sixteenth-century alchemist and one of the founders of the Rosicrucians; and Louis Claude de St. Martin, the pontiff of French Illuminism in the nineteenth century. Jacolliot spent much of his life in Asia, specifically in India, where he served in the diplomatic corps. Among his works, the following are of significance: *Krishna and Christ* (*Krishna et le Christ*), *Indo-Asiatic Traditions* (*Les traditions indoasiatiques*), *Kings, Priests and Castes* (*Rois, prêtres et castes*).

Jacolliot sees the principle of all human activity of a transcendental nature in the Vril, a tremendous reserve of energy of which man uses but the tiniest part. Curiously enough, the Vril still exists in India, as an esoteric sect, and



a few years ago could claim two million followers throughout the province of Mysore. The faithful worship the Sun and, every morning, bow down to the Dawn. Their temples are inscribed at the corners with the swastika.

The Vril Society,<sup>13</sup> founded in Germany at the beginning of the century, had within the country close ties with the various theosophical centers and abroad, with the British secret society, The Golden Dawn, founded by S. L. Mathers. Among the Berliners belonging to the Vril Society, we note the name of Karl Haushofer. Born in 1869, he was the object of much talk and speculation until his death in 1946. He made numerous trips to the Orient, notably to Japan (where he studied Buddhism) and to India. In 1918, Haushofer moved to Munich, refuge for all the racist secret societies, and was among the first members of the German Workers' Party (DAP), founded that same year by the locksmith Anton Drexler. His party was soon transformed into the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) under the impetus of Hitler.

Nonetheless, the role of Haushofer, founder of geopolitics, was not in the long run as important as some have thought. It is in the Thule Society that one has to look for the real inspiration of Nazism. The *Thule Gesellschaft* was created in August, 1918, under the initiative of a strange character named Baron von Sebottendorf. The Thule Society was itself but a fragment of a much more important secret society known as the *Germanenorden* (Germanic Order) founded in 1912, of which Sebottendorf was one of the leaders; this is attested to by the fact that as early as January, 1918, we see Sebottendorf heading up the Bavarian branch of the order.

Born in Saxony in 1875, Sebottendorf, just before World War I, had made numerous trips to the Near East. During the Balkan War of 1912-1913, he directed the Turkish Red Crescent and was named a Master of the Order of the Rose-Garland (*Rosenkranz*). His influence was considerable: Fol-

lowing the defeat of 1918, he menaced with utter impunity the Chief of Police of Munich, threatening him with setting off a wave of pogroms which would topple the government, in the event that any member of the Thule Society were harassed.

The *Thule Gesellschaft* was a front for a whole web of groups which drew their toxin from the same racist and anti-Semitic occultism: One such group was the Hammer Union which could count among its influential members the political theorist Gottfried Feder and which furnished cadres to the future Nazi Party. The meetings took place in Munich, traditionally the hub of secret and anti-Weimar movements. We also note, in this circle of the initiate, the presence of Hans Frank, Nazi lawyer and future governor-general of Poland, who at that time was involved with a society for heraldic and genealogical research, headed by Dr. W. Daumenlang. Daumenlang had discovered in the *Hohenzollern* coat of arms the *Hakenkreuz* (the swastika) under the form of a solar wheel. As for the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the newspaper which later became the official Nazi Party journal under the impetus of Alfred Rosenberg, it had just been bought by Sebottendorf in the name of the *Thule Gesellschaft*. Dietrich Eckart, who was for many years Hitler's mentor, facilitated the purchase by his coming up with a very large sum of money whose origin has remained a mystery.

In his book (now all but unobtainable) *Before Hitler Came* (*Bevor Hitler kam*, 1933), Sebottendorf recalls the esoteric source of his doctrine. His revelations are tangential to our own in that he shows that the founders of the National Socialist Party did not hesitate to borrow a portion of their Gnostic inspiration from Islam, a religion still possessing momentum and providing accessibility to the esotericism of Ancient Egypt: "Islam is not a static religion. Quite the contrary, its vitality is greater than that of Christianity." From whence came its strength? From its hidden



origins, "... from a torrent which nourished everything, at the time of primitive Christianity, and which in the Middle Ages gave rise to the most marvelous civilizations." It is not possible to understand this quest at the very sources of the great religions: Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Islam, save in putting oneself within the outlook of the new masters of Germany. In their mind, it was essential that any and all means be invoked to rediscover "the thread of lost knowledge" and in this intention, to draw upon the traditional esotericisms, which alone would lead to the re-constituting, page by page, of the "Great Book of Aryan Mythology."

"It must be shown," notes Sebottendorf, "that Eastern Freemasonry still retains faithfully even today the ancient teachings of wisdom forgotten by modern Freemasonry, whose Constitution of 1717 was a departure from the true way."

In his own mind, Sebottendorf was convinced that he had been given a mission:

No one can accuse me of profanation, nor of sacrilege in uncovering the course of these mysteries . . . It is the means that the communities of dervishes traditionally use in order to acquire special strength by means of unusual techniques. They are, for the most part, men who aspire to the highest rite, that from which come those who have been prepared for their missions as spiritual leaders of Islam. . . . This high rite is the practical basis of Freemasonry, and it inspired in times past the work of the alchemists and of the Rosicrucians. . . . But to reply to the accusation of my being guilty of some kind of treachery: I say to you plainly that *this book has been written on the instructions of the leaders of the order*. The reason is the following: A vast organization of disbelief, of monstrous proportions, intends to bend to its will the civilized world. The religious institutions have been so gravely weakened that they are not even capable of pulling themselves together, let alone putting up a united front. If spiritual leaders do not come forth in the West, chaos may bring down everything into the abyss. In this kind of danger, the Moslem brotherhood recalled that tradition had it that there was a time, in Europe,

when men possessed ultimate knowledge. . . . The imminent danger dispelled every objection to the publication [of this work].<sup>14</sup>

In this initiation, Sebottendorf claims as his master, the leader of the Hammer Union,<sup>15</sup> Theodor Fritsch (1852-1933), author of the *Manual of the Jewish Question* which had in its time a certain success. Fritsch's book evoked the great myths of the past by now familiar to the reader, from those of the fearsome giants to those of "Christian mystification."

Fritsch had some significant influence on the elaboration of the theories of the Germanic Order, founded in 1912, which gathered together certain lodges of the racist Prussian Freemasonry, as well as a number of openly anti-Semitic associations. It was at Thale, in May, 1914, according to Sebottendorf, that "the militants of the *Germanenorden* formed a secret alliance, the first anti-Semitic lodge, whose purpose as a society aware of the problem, was to oppose the Jewish alliance."

The Germanic Order was known equally under the name "Alliance for the Duty of Primitive German Art and for Knowledge," a title which tells us enough about its secret goals. The Thule Society became a particularly active branch of the main society, since the principal Nazi intellectuals were destined to come from it, while at the same time borrowing from it numerous rites (notably that of the greeting "Sieg Heil," according to Sebottendorf). What makes us believe that he was speaking the truth is the ban placed on his book by the Nazi government in 1934. He was talking too much.

The following, according to Ray Petitfrère (*The Mystique of the Swastika*) [*La mystique de la croix gammée*],<sup>16</sup> were the rules of the *Germanenorden* under the leadership of the German baron:

- (1) The order accepted for membership only the German able to prove the purity of his blood to at least three generations



back. Women (as also in the Enlightened Ones of Bavaria) were admitted only as auxiliaries and were bound to have conjugal relations only with a German of pure blood.

- (2) A special importance was given to racist propaganda. It was necessary to make applicable to man the same findings governing the vegetal and plant species, and it was to be shown that the fundamental cause of all sickness and of all misery was the mixing of the races.

By the eve of the war of 1914, some hundred or so lodges were already to be found across the length and breadth of Germany, counting several thousand members. Of course, the entire organization remained secret. In December, 1917, under the impetus of Sebottendorf, it was decided to release the *News Concerning the Order*, but only to the initiate, while the *Runics* would be made available to those persons holding the rank of "auxiliary."

It was on this occasion that Sebottendorf assumed the important position of leader of the Order for Bavaria. His own observations on the matter are revealing: "This decision was important, for Bavaria has thereby become the cradle of the National Socialist movement."

On the order's publications was prominently displayed the swastika with the symbol of the god Wotan. As for the designation "Thule," which replaced that of "Germanic Order," the name evokes once more for us the myth of the lost Hyperborean continent. This name could not but fascinate Sebottendorf, ever on the watch for magic symbols. He was exceedingly well-informed in astrology, drawing up horoscopes for numerous highly placed personalities. It was at his behest that from 1918 onward the lodges convened every Saturday, which is the day of Saturn, the star linked to the destiny of Adolf Hitler (born under the sign of the Ram), who transcribed the astrological sign in his signature. Let us add that the official insignia of the *Thule Gesellschaft*, as found in the lodges, consisted of the swastika traversed by two lances.

The defeat of 1918 favored the growth of the esoteric

racist groups who knew how to capitalize on the despair of many Germans. In this regard, the speech given by Sebottendorf on November 9, 1918 (two days before the Armistice), is highly significant:

I intend to commit the *Thule Gesellschaft* to this combat, as long as I shall hold the Iron Hammer. . . . I swear it on this swastika, on this sign which for us is sacred, in order that you hear it, O triumphant Sun! And I shall keep my faith with you. Have confidence in me as I have confidence in you. . . . Our God is the father of battle and his rune is that of the eagle . . . which is the symbol of the Aryans. And to call attention to the fiery nature of the eagle, he will be shown in red. . . . Such is our symbol, the red eagle who reminds us that we must pass through death in order to live again.

Let us note carefully the attachment to the symbolism of the eagle, which not long thereafter will be taken up by the Nazis, with the swastika, along with the neo-Gnostic belief in the reincarnation of souls, all of this in the midst of an esoteric delirium calculated to impress the listener.

In his book *Before Hitler Came*, Sebottendorf published the complete list of all of the members of the Nazi Party having belonged to the Thule Society. Among the cadres of the Hitler movement, we find the following names in alphabetical order:

*Amann (Max)*: Will become editor-in-chief of publications of the Nationalist Socialist Party.

*Drexler (Anton)*: Founder and president of the German Workers' Party (DAP), which will become the NSDAP.

*Eckart (Dietrich)*: Editor-in-chief of the *Völkischer Beobachter* and counselor to Hitler. Died in 1923.

*Feder (Gottfried)*: Professor of political economics, cofounder of the Nazi Party, deputy to the Reichstag in 1924, secretary of state for commerce in 1933.

*Fiehler (Karl)*: Took part in the November 9, 1933, putsch with Hitler. *Obergruppenführer* SS and *Reichsleiter* of the Nazi Party.

*Frank (Hans)*: Doctor of laws, lawyer and counselor for juris-



prudence of the NSDAP. Later became governor-general of Occupied Poland (1940).

*Harrer (Karl)*: First president of the National Socialist Association of German Workers. Died in 1926.

*Hess (Rudolf)*: Born April 26, 1894, in Alexandria, Egypt. Attended Swiss universities where he studied foreign languages. Volunteered and served as officer in German Air Force. One of the first members of the Nazi Party, he took part in the Munich putsch and shared Hitler's imprisonment at Landsberg. He was minister of state (1933) and Hitler's designated heir from 1937 until Hess's flight to England (1941).

*Hitler (Adolf)*: Belonged to the Thule Society as an "associate" or "visiting brother."

*Rosenberg (Alfred)*: Born January 12, 1893. Collaborator of D. Eckart and editor-in-chief of the *Völkischer Beobachter* in 1924. Reichsleiter of the Nazi Party, party philosopher, minister and chief of foreign services of the NSDAP. Author among other works of the notorious *Myth of the 20th Century*.

*Sebottendorf (Rudolf von)*: His true name was Glauer. Adopted in 1911 by the Baron von Sebottendorf, whose name he took after the death of the latter. Expelled from Germany as an undesirable alien (he had been a Turkish citizen since 1911), he returned to Turkey in 1924. From 1929-1931, he roamed through Mexico and the United States. Believed to have drowned in 1945.

In their ensemble, these names shed no small light on a lesser-known side of the Thule Society and on the real origins of Nazism. From them we can draw our own conclusions.

#### BIRTH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY

When he was demobilized after four years of war, Hitler felt the defeat of Germany to be an injustice and a betrayal, which he blamed on the socialists and the Jews. Having made his mind up, according to his own words, "to get into politics,"<sup>17</sup> he looked for an opportunity. In Septem-

ber, 1919, while acting as an informer for the army's Political Department, Hitler received orders to have a look at a tiny political group headed by Anton Drexler that met regularly in a Munich brewery. The Thule Society had already taken possession of this political nucleus that was the German Workers' Party (DAP), managing to infiltrate it in March, 1919, through one of its agents, Karl Harrer. This journalist had then brought about the fusion of the Political Workers' Circle, which he headed, with the new party.

When Hitler came into the meeting hall of the "Sternbräu," Gottfried Feder (a major figure in the *Thule Gesellschaft*) was addressing the group. Feder, who would become economic advisor of the NSDAP, noticed Hitler immediately, not only because of what was unusual about him, but also because he had seen him somewhere before. Feder had previously given some courses in political science and economics to army personnel, courses which Hitler had attended regularly prior to his being demobilized and which made a profound impression on him. While we can only speculate as to whether Hitler had already been under surveillance by Feder and other members of the Thule Society, it is a fact that his impassioned interruption of the speech of a Bavarian autonomist in the course of the meeting called attention to him. Drexler invited Hitler to participate henceforth in the meetings of his committee. Hitler accepted the invitation, and some days thereafter, he joined the DAP as member number seven (sacred number).<sup>18</sup>

But it was Dietrich Eckart, a well-known writer and journalist, who already belonged to Drexler's party and was a member of the *Thule Gesellschaft*, who started Hitler on his way up by giving him sufficient money to launch a publicity campaign. Eckart took Hitler under his wing and made him his political protégé. It was under these auspices that he introduced him to Captain Röhm, political officer of the Reichswehr who had the backing of numerous persons among the army command (including his own superior,



General Ritter von Epp). Röhm brought to Hitler the blessings of the military, as well as of the Bavarian government, an invaluable asset to someone starting out in politics. The entire operation was painstakingly coordinated. We need only two more names for putting together the puzzle of the enterprise's origins: Rudolf Hess and Alfred Rosenberg brought to the infant movement an important resource in their "secret" knowledge. Both men had from 1920 to 1925 an immense influence on Hitler to whom they preached the gospel of the Thule Society. Hess and Rosenberg were introduced to Hitler by Dietrich Eckart, who without question comes off as the pivotal personage in the origins of Hitlerism.

We shall come back to the person of Alfred Rosenberg, a man somewhat lost in his dream world. As for Hess, born in Egypt in 1896, he received a solid public school and university education in Switzerland before volunteering for the army in 1914, ending up his wartime service as a flying officer. Fervently nationalistic and fascinated by the esoteric, Hess joined the Thule Society. It was he who introduced to Hitler the famous geopolitician Karl Haushofer, former general and professor at the University of Munich (we know a good bit about his strange activities within the Vril Society). If we add to this list Max Amann, Hitler's former sergeant-major at the front (he too a member of the Thule Society), who will become the editor and the business manager of the party, we have the principal protagonists at the beginnings of Hitler's first undertaking. All of these persons belonged to various secret societies, including the Thule Society or the Vril. There is, therefore, nothing surprising to find them constantly involved in the rites of the new religion of the swastika.

Having at its disposal a political party, financial backing, and a secret society (which could guide Hitler), the NSDAP was to become the war machine of these new Gnostics, headed by a formidable instigator, Adolf Hitler, the only

man possessing the wherewithal for rousing Germany from its lethargic sleep and making it the docile instrument of his sinister plans. On his deathbed in 1923, Dietrich Eckart told his intimates: "Follow Hitler. He will dance, but it is I who have written the music. We have given him the means for communicating with them. . . . Don't weep for me: I shall have had more influence on the course of history than any other German."



# 9

## The Hitlerian Cosmogony

### FALSE INTERPRETATIONS

The intellectual historians, specialists in the Nazi phenomenon, restrict themselves to studying isolated events and say nothing of the "spiraled" politics of the Third Reich or the geopolitics so dear to the heart of Karl Haushofer. In so doing, they take their place among the interpreters who have called attention to only a fragment of truth in this phenomenon, unique not only in terms of its countless crimes, but also in terms of its consequences (for which we are still paying today): We refer to the dividing-up of the world at Yalta and to the matter of decolonization. To those historians mired in historical fact, the warning of the chancellor of the Third Reich should set matters straight: "He who has seen in National Socialism only a political movement has seen nothing."

The same holds true concerning the commonplace mistake of lumping together the quite dissimilar Nazism and Fascism. On this point we cannot do better than to quote a personal reflection of Hitler's for the exclusive benefit of his intimates:

No more than anyone will ever be able to make of the Italian people a warlike nation has Fascism understood what are the stakes in the colossal struggle about to begin. We shall doubtless be able to ally ourselves temporarily with Italy, but in the final analysis, there are none but ourselves, the National Socialists and we alone, who have fathomed the secret of the gigantic changes in prospect.<sup>1</sup>

Credit is due Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier for having been among the first to put forth the hypothesis according to which the analysis of Nazism could only be accomplished obliquely through the kind of magic which characterized the education of its leaders. However, their work *The Morning of the Magicians* and their method of fantastic realism have served to further impede a clear understanding of the Hitlerian phenomenon.

But one can only find a sound and lucid approach to the phenomenon by trying to see what the vanquished was like, rather than by crowing that the just man conquered the evil-doer. This simplistic conception of history is a dangerous kind of anti-Fascism which provides an excuse for not having been able to predict what the post-war world would be like.

The fact that a sociopolitical movement profoundly different from our own was able to appear, develop, and come close to dragging down the world should not make us forget earlier examples in history, under the penalty of seeing this mystique come back to life a few decades from now. For what we are dealing with is a new religion, a new mystique analogous to the birth of Christianity, whose aim was to establish everywhere on earth a universal confraternity of masters and lords. Alphonse de Chateaubriant chronicled the intellectual rise of this mystique in the soul of German youth:

Standing near me was the young fragment of Germany, a bit of German landscape formed by his blond head and his blue eyes. . . . "And here in Germany, what are you doing? . . . What is



your main concern?" "I am studying the conception of the world," he answered softly. "We refuse to think and to be; we refuse to stand by helplessly under the determinism of the so-called laws of matter. What we want is inside, an inner structure . . . And how we want it! We shall not let anyone stop us from building before God and before men that which must be built!" He spoke as though I might have been a French Templar, one of the last Templars of France, a sort of last survivor of the massacres and burnings of the town, who had come to hear and to gather the serious thoughts of some plainspoken knight of the Teutonic Order.<sup>2</sup>

As early as 1920, the Maître d'Ussat, A. Gadal, renowned scholar of Catharism whom Otto Rahn was to meet several times and to whom he acknowledged his indebtedness in the preface to his *Crusade Against the Grail*, observed that Germany seemed to be experiencing a neo-Gnostic revival, along with anthroposophy, the different Rosicrucianisms, etc. Gadal also noted that the Germans assured the shrines of Catharism a fervent clientele; at the same time, he observed that Goethe (unquestionably an initiate) and German romanticism had been the moving spirits behind this neo-Catharism.

All the signs of the birth of a new prophet or the coming of an imperial German Messiah (of an Antichrist in the Nietzschean sense of the term), were increasingly clear in 1920. It seems that no one has given an historical account of this convergence of indicators and testimonies: What we are witnessing is a real psychological arming of the German people. This psychological preparation, identical to that which rocked the Middle Ages and whose phases aimed at harnessing the human spirit, can be followed by the historian. Thus the pope was the relentless enemy of the emperor in the spiritual and temporal domain, just as the formalistic, rigoristic Church was the enemy of the Cathar preachers and troubadours, who sought to lift up souls outside of Rome.

Likewise, Hitler had been persuaded that he was the messenger of Providence sent to teach mankind and to put the torch to the world, if need be. In *Hitler's Horoscope* Kerneiz said that in Hitler's astral plane the moon is at 6°37' from Capricorn, and this position corresponds in the Hindu zodiac to the Sravana constellation. This has a very precise meaning; its influence makes leaders of philosophical and political movements, and founders of religious sects. It is assuredly to this astral characteristic, says Kerneiz, that Nazism, or more exactly, Hitlerism, owes its mystical character. This explains how this "messiah" of the Germans could say: "We see in our people the fulfillment of that biblical passage which says that the hot and the cold will be accepted, but that the lukewarm will be vomited. . . . The Almighty Himself allows the destruction of the lukewarm and, thus, wants us to be victorious."

Certain writers, such as Pierre Chabert, have recalled that the world had come to the very brink of a disaster without parallel with the appearance of this "satanic Gnosis" which was Nazism. Pierre Durban, in a most interesting work entitled *The Reality of Catharism (Actualité du catharisme)*, states:

Present-day society is more than ever experiencing spiritual crises, antitheses which without doubt are the price of a fundamentally materialistic drive of modern times. We would also stress the fact that this wave of materialism is a worldwide phenomenon, every bit as present to the west as to the east of the Iron Curtain. As one German minister put it: "On one side they preach this doctrine; on the other, they practice it."

The embryo of these ideological confrontations can be found in the medieval struggles of which the Cathar crisis was only one example among many others. Seven centuries seemed to have buried this drama in the most remote depths of a forgotten past. Only a few scholars, or some of the faithful, continued to poke in the still smoldering ashes, and now they see this frightening specter reappear with a new presence and vigor.<sup>3</sup>



One is tempted to believe, in the light of everything that is known, that behind the personality of Hitler were certain "Unknown Superiors," to use a term purposely vague.<sup>4</sup> It appears almost certain that these superiors were for some time extremely powerful. But as often happens, the thing they created overwhelmed its creators; this Faust-like event indeed appears to have occurred in the case of Nazism. Everything suggests that Hitler, possessed of a most extraordinary will, got out of the hands of his initiators and, like the golem of the Middle Ages, turned against them and ousted them from the politico-mythical leadership of his movement.

We are here at the very birth of Hitlerism. That we have not tried to find excuses for Nazism should be apparent. But the horrible events which came in its wake give history an added dimension; they put it on the level of a struggle between two spiritual conceptions. Rauschnig, who as a civilized man was terrified by what he saw but who had no clues as to the Führer's thoughts, has enabled us to bring into focus this magic vision of Hitler:

Creation is not finished. Man is clearly approaching a phase of metamorphosis. The earlier human species has already reached the stage of dying out and of survival. Humanity climbs up one more notch every 700 years, and the stake in the battle, in the longer run of things, is the coming of the sons of God. All of the force of creation will be concentrated in a new species. The two strains will evolve rapidly, upon separating. One will disappear, and the other will bloom. This new species will surpass infinitely modern man. . . . Do you understand now the profound meaning of our National Socialist movement?<sup>5</sup>

The Nazi declaration of war on human values is embodied in the following statement of Adolf Hitler: "The tablets of the Law of Sinai no longer have any meaning." We can only repeat what has already been duly noted by others:

It would be easier to make a civilized man of a Bantu witch doctor, than it would have been to integrate to our human values

Hitler, Hörbiger, of Haushofer. But German knowhow, German science, German organization, comparable if not superior to our own, hid this point of view from us. The formidable newness of Nazi Germany is that magic thought was allied to science and knowhow.<sup>6</sup>

#### MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALISM

It would be a mistake to believe that, because Hitlerian racism surrounds itself with scientific procedures having to do with biology, the National Socialist conception of the superman is founded on a materialism. By a reasoning process which seems to us altogether alien, the Hitlerian Gnosis wants to act upon man in order to transform the universe, in the same way that, through mystico-religious means, it wants to act upon the universe in order to transform man. In this perspective, matter acts upon spirit, and spirit acts upon matter, in such a way as to bring about a transmutation of all values. It alone is capable of bringing the superman toward the omega which is perfection. Such, according to this interpretation, is the meaning of the words: "I am the alpha and the omega"<sup>7</sup> and the myth of the serpent of the Gnosis, who bites his tail. At the basis of such a doctrine, reserved for a small number of initiates, we see an incommensurate arrogance which would make of man his own god, while trampling underfoot traditional morality and scorning the great masses of humanity condemned to return (as in Manichaeism and Catharism) to the chaos (*hyle*) of the beginning.

In this racial philosophy, Hitlerism found some unexpected support in a great French writer rarely recognized as a precursor of Nazism. Ernest Renan, the author of *The Life of Christ* (*Vie de Jesus*, 1863), reveals in that work a lesser-known side of himself, that of a racist and of a confirmed esotericist:

A broad application of the discoveries of physiology and of the principle of selection could bring about *the creation of a superior*



race, having the right to govern others, not only by reason of its knowledge, but *by the very superiority of its blood*, intelligence, and determination. What we would have would be *species of gods* or *divas*, beings worth ten times what we are worth who could adapt themselves to artificial environments. The viable is inherently implicit within the context of general conditions; but science will be able to extend the limits of viability.

We can imagine an age when the production of a *diva* will have a capital value, representing the expensive apparatus, the lengthy preparation, the laborious selecting, the complicated education, and the difficult preservation of such an unnatural being. *A factory for making Ases, an Asgard<sup>8</sup> will be able to be set up in Central Asia.* We can, therefore, conceive of the possibility of beings (somewhere beyond our planet) in comparison with whom man would have roughly as little significance as animals do when compared with man. Much in the same way that mankind came from an animality, so also divinity would come from mankind. There would be beings who would use man, as man uses animals. . . . *But, I repeat, intellectual superiority brings religious superiority. We should think of these future masters as incarnations of the Good and the True; there would have to be total submission to them.*

In this same vein of thinking, *we can conceive of a time when everything which has reigned on the level of prejudice and personal opinion would reign on the level of reality and of truth:* Gods, paradise, hell, spiritual power, monarchy, nobility, legitimacy, racial superiority, and supernatural powers can be reborn through human action and thought. I would guess that *if such a solution ever happens to any extent anywhere here on earth, it will happen in Germany.*

Renan was not far off. He added:

But it will not be *this* country [France] which will ever achieve the collective harmony or, if you prefer, the great enslavement of the conscience which we are talking about. On the contrary, the governing of the world through reason, if it should take place, appears better suited to the mind of Germany, which shows little concern for the equality or even for the dignity of individuals, and whose major goal is the augmenting of the intellectual powers of the species.<sup>9</sup>

Another philosopher, but of our own times, René Guénon, helps us to appreciate this special kind of spirituality which was at the very roots of Nazism. Guénon, a self-professed neo-Gnostic, sees in the world the continual opposition of the principles of *quality* and *quantity*. In making this dualistic principle a part of racist dogma, all that the Nazi intellectuals did was to transpose the conflict of the two principles, as posited by Manes and the Cathars, by giving it a particularly shocking revolutionary content.

These oppositions between quantity and quality, matter and spirit, and light and darkness, are characteristic of all the dualistic philosophies, from Mazdaism to Catharism. It is in opposition to Christianity and to Judaism. On the other hand, we also find this kind of dualistic concept in the Moslem esotericism practiced by the Persian Sufis. It is not, therefore, at all surprising to find among the most prominent Nazis, starting with Alfred Rosenberg, an unconcealed admiration for all religious efforts denying monism and endeavoring to link up with one particular tradition whose intention is to teach man again the language of the gods.

The German man of letters Paul Ernst wrote, in 1935, in his work *A Creed (Eine Credo)*:

A German of the Middle Ages and a Persian mystic experience the same thing: the first as a Christian and within the framework of scholastic theology, the other as a Mohammedan and in the forms of Shiite philosophy. What counts, is neither the philosophy nor Christianity nor Islam, but the religious experience, the feeling which has taken on these forms. We can get an idea of the process by considering the following:

Through the work of several generations of poets, philosophers, artists, and scientists, the soul of early man rose up, and where it had formerly seen a religion, it now saw only the anguish of the barbarian face to face with the unknown. A new feeling had taken hold of these men: *They felt that they could become the children of God.* They looked about among the extant forms, gods, cults, myths: *They seized upon the idea, for example, of incarnating this new feeling in the cult of Mithra, or in the cosmogonic myths of the Gnostics.*



*He who experiences time as eternity,  
He who experiences eternity as time,  
That man is delivered from all suffering.*

If therefore, at the present time, our people are experiencing a new religious feeling which, for many, cannot be expressed in any one of the forms of the Christian religion, we can understand that men interpret this feeling as a longing for things of the past. We find something much like this among the best minds of Greece, at the time Sophocles wrote his *Oedipus at Colonus*: religion at its vital stage, religion which has not yet found its form. That is the element common to religion, art, and love: They are alive as long as they remain on the level of desire, and as soon as they are perfected, their decline begins. . . .

Might it be possible for mankind to find a purely spiritual religion, one no longer needing body, expression, or form, and which would be only feeling?

The Nazi writer concludes with an observation on the ideological struggle in which Germany finds herself engaged:

*In this war, an old world is crumbling. Will the new world, this world of which we can now only have the faintest inkling, also have a religion, a religion as yet unknown to us, and contradicting everything which we now know: the Third Reich?*

Paul Ernst, who contrasts the Third Reich and its enemies, believes that the conflict is taking place, not in a material phase, but between the Catholic Church and the new Gnosis:

*Were we to judge this war only from a logical viewpoint, we would have to despair. It is moreover nothing else than the continuation of the struggle carried on by the different nations during the periods they call peace. The only difference is that this struggle is being carried forward with other means and in another realm of time.*

In order that the new age come about by stopping the present cycle, there will have to be a battle from which the

German Siegfried must come out the victor. The Nazi leaders, however, were not unaware of how much the people remained attached to the Christian religion, no more than they could fail to recognize the degree to which the intellectual elite persisted in its belief in the objective value of science. That is why they did their best to attack the enemy by indirect means, substituting for the universe of logic and reason a world sired by the imagination, a cosmogony which, by reviving the Pagan myths of their ancestors, would put to flight the humanistic ideal of Christianity. It is with this idea in mind that we shall study the delirious and fantastic Hitlerian cosmogony concerning man and the universe.

#### MAN AND THE UNIVERSE

The secret doctrine of Nazism concerning the tangible world and its makeup reflects, as we have said, the dualistic conception of the two worlds. That is why the theories of the Austrian scientist Hörbiger were so favorably received by the Nazis. This explains an event gone unnoticed at the time but which is nonetheless extremely revealing. One day in the summer of 1925, German and Austrian scientists found in their letter boxes the following message:

You must choose, and right now, whether you want to be with us, or against us. While Hitler cleans up politics, Hans Hörbiger will take care of the false sciences. The doctrine of the eternal ice will herald the regeneration of the German people. Watch out! Come over to our side before it is too late!

Hörbiger, the author of this threatening letter, was at that time at the height of his influence. Postulating an explanation of the cosmos in contradiction with orthodox astronomy, the Austrian scientist believed that "objective science is a pernicious invention, a totem of decadence." Only the illuminated, the inspired prophet, could attain to true knowledge.



With substantial funds at his disposal, Hörbiger created his own movement through an association which would propagate his doctrine through the press, posters, brochures, and by word of mouth. His henchmen were often recruited from among the Nazi storm troopers. Dozens of works were thus published under the aegis of the Hörbigerian movement, which also gave lectures and sent out a periodical (*The Key to World Events*). This strange society found tens of thousands of enthusiastic supporters in Germany and Austria and saw its concepts triumph with Hitler's coming to power in 1933. Hitler had been entirely won over to the theories of the old prophet of the eternal ice, to the point of taking counsel with him on various occasions, whereas generally he would listen to no one.

What really was Hörbiger's doctrine to which a number of other scientists subscribed, among them the physicist Philipp Lenard (a pioneer whose work led to the discovery of X-rays), as well as Oberth and Stark, famous for their research on spectroscopy? Hörbiger's theory

... draws its strength from a complete vision of history and of the evolution of the cosmos. It explains how the solar system was formed, the birth of the Earth, of life, and of spirit. It describes the entire past of the universe and tells what its future transformations will be like. It answers the three most essential questions: "What are we? Where do we come from? Where are we headed?" And it answers in a way which exalts.<sup>10</sup>

The main, quasi-mythical principle of the Hörbigerian system is the eternal struggle in the cosmos between *ice* and *fire*, the force which repels and the force which attracts.<sup>11</sup> This dualistic principle governs the ensemble of creation and therefore, as a matter of course, the solar system and our planet.

Hörbiger, who drew from the deep-seated myths in mankind's subconscious, is a partisan of the theory of cycles adopted by Plato. The Earth, life, and mankind have not

known a continuous evolution but a slow ascent by fits and starts, interrupted periodically by relapses (which make creation fall back once again to its earlier stage). After the civilizations of the giants, the Earth experienced indescribable catastrophes which swallowed up entire continents (Atlantis, Hyperborea), bringing in their wake the degeneration of superior man. To find man-god, we have to bring about a new mutation, which will restore life to our universe under the particular conditions created by a new cycle. We find here the basis of all the Hitlerian speculations on man and the world. We need only listen to the remarks of Hitler himself to be convinced. Hitler notes in his *Hitler's Secret Conversations*, 1941-44:

Legend cannot be drawn from nothingness; it cannot be a purely gratuitous construction. Nothing stops us from supposing, and I even believe that it would be to our interest to do so, that mythology constitutes a reflection of things which have existed and of which mankind has preserved some vague memory. *In all of man's traditions, oral and written, we find reference to an immense cosmic catastrophe.* What the Bible relates on this subject is not peculiar to the Jews, but unquestionably was taken by them from the Babylonians and the Assyrians.

In Nordic legend, we are told of a struggle between the giants and the gods.

To my way of thinking, the only explanation possible is the hypothesis of *a catastrophe completely destroying a humanity which already possessed a highly developed civilization.* . . .<sup>12</sup>

I am at the point of accepting Hörbiger's theories. We cannot rule out the possibility that 10,000 years before our era an interference occurred between the Earth and the moon which placed the moon in its present orbit. It is also possible that the Earth drew off the moon's atmosphere, which would have radically changed the conditions of life on our planet. We can suppose that before this accident, man could live at any altitude (by virtue of the simple fact that he was not subject to the effect of atmospheric pressure). We can also speculate that the Earth having opened up, the water rushed into the breach which had



been formed, that explosions followed, then rains of deluvian proportions from which families could save themselves only by taking refuge in the places of higher elevation. It seems to me that these questions will be able to be solved on the day that someone determines intuitively the relationship between these facts and shows exact science what direction to take. Otherwise, we will never raise the curtain that has come between our present world and the one which preceded us.

If we look at our religions at the time of their beginnings, we find that they have something more human about them than they do later on. I think that religions have their origin in these faded images of another world, of which the human mind has retained some faint recollection. Man's mind mixed together these images with various notions elaborated upon by his intelligence, and it was in this way that the Churches put together the ideological framework which assures to this day their power.<sup>13</sup>

Further on, Hitler does not hide his admiration for the Austrian scientist and his theory of eternal ice:

It was a great step forward, at the time of Ptolemy, to say that the Earth was round and that the stars revolved around it. Since then, there has been continued progress in this direction. First of all Copernicus. Copernicus in turn is completely overtaken, and so on. In our time, Hörbiger has moved us another step forward. . . . Modern science claims that the moon is a part of the Earth which was thrown into space and that the Earth is an emanation of the sun.<sup>14</sup> The real question is to find out whether the Earth came from the sun or whether it is tending to draw nearer it. As for myself, there is no doubt that the planets, as satellites, are subject to the attraction of an immovable point, the sun. Since there is no vacuum, it is possible that the speed of rotation and of translation of the planets will decrease. There is therefore nothing to stop Mars, for example, from being a satellite of Earth. Hörbiger stresses one particular point here. He states that the element which we call water is in reality nothing less than melted ice (rather than ice being only frozen water): It is ice which we find in the universe and not water. This theory constituted a revolution, and everybody was against Hörbiger.<sup>15</sup>

And siding solidly with the revolutionary scientist, Hitler said, in 1942, dreaming of grandiose projects which would never materialize: "I shall have an observatory built on the other side of the Danube where the three great cosmological conceptions of history will be illustrated: that of Ptolemy, that of Copernicus, and that of Hörbiger."<sup>16</sup>

This declaration of faith in Hörbiger is not surprising at all, coming from the mouth of Germany's master, a product of secret societies. But we should explain the rest of this cosmology, since Hitler did not do so for his guests.

At the end of time, the cycles will be ended by a cosmic catastrophe; the moon which revolves around our planet will draw near Earth. It will exert on our globe an increasing attraction, raising the oceans, and causing gigantic tides. The species will again take refuge on mountaintops and will experience a progressive weightlessness. They will become larger and stronger. The sun's rays will be more intense and mutations will occur, creating new animal species and new men that are similar to the most ancient: the giants. Finally, the moon will draw near once again, burst as a result of its speed, and be transformed into a ring of rocks, gas, and ice, turning with increasing speed around the Earth. Then this ring will fall upon the Earth. This will be the Apocalypse.

But the Earth will survive this catastrophe, and after new life cycles, it will be without a satellite. One day, however, Mars, which is smaller than our planet, will move into the magnetic field of Earth, but since Mars is too large to be captured by the Earth, it will not become a satellite like the moon. It will just barely touch the Earth, snatching up its atmosphere, which will be lost in space. The boiling oceans will sweep over the Earth's shell, which will burst. The earthly globe, now dead, will be transformed into an enormous ball of ice which will throw itself into the sun. Thus will the world be ready to experience a new explosion of life.



This vision of the end of the world was not simply created from nothing by Hörbiger and the Nazi scientists. They did nothing more nor less than adopt for their own purpose ideas expressed well before their time by Manichaeism, which itself drew on very old myths. The Hörbigerian conception is identical, merely transposed into modern terms; it is Dualism. "The true and the false," exclaims Manes, "have each returned to its source. Light, on its side, has returned to the great light; darkness, on its side, has re-joined total darkness. The two principles are reconstituted. Both have given back what each held of the other." In the same manner, in Manichaean and Cathar eschatology, the Apocalypse is to take place through the Earth's burning (a burning instead of a freezing, but the myth is much the same). The last particles of light will come together in a gigantic whole which will ascend into the heavens, while matter will form an enormous ball similar to the original chaos. So will it be that at the end of time, like fire and ice, the two opposing principles will once more be separated from each other, as they were in the beginning.

In the same tradition, the conceptions of Hörbiger come back to those of the Gnostics and of the neo-Platonists of Alexandria. The *Enneades* of Plotinus were reedited in Germany and the occupied countries. "The *Enneades* were read," Pauwels and Bergier inform us, "in the small groups of mystical, pro-German intellectuals, during the war, along with the writings of the Hindus, Nietzsche, and the Tibetans." Under every line of Plotinus, one could put a sentence of Hörbiger, especially when the Greek philosopher brings out the natural and supernatural relations of man with the cosmos and of all the parts of the universe among themselves:

This universe is a unique animal, which contains within it all the animals. Without being in contact with one another, things act and necessarily have an action through distance. . . . The world is a unique animal, that is why it must necessarily be in

harmony with itself; there is no element of chance in its life, but a harmony and a single order.

It was this conception of the world which motivated Hitler and Nazism, as they moved by degrees toward the ultimate goal, which is the mutation of man and his chimeric transformation into a god.

#### THE MEANS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The twentieth century had barely dawned when Bergson prophesied: "The universe is a machine for making gods." Teilhard de Chardin echoed him in admitting the hypothesis of a "drift" giving birth to "some ultrahuman form": The famous theory of biological mutations had just seen the light of day.

This pleased the Nazi leaders, for this theory brought grist to their terrible mill: they saw in it an additional encouragement for their wish to create superman. This wish, which Nietzsche had felt in his own way, should be compared with certain statements of Hitler: "The new man is already among us, he is there," Hitler shouted triumphantly. "Are you satisfied? I'll tell you a secret. I have seen the new man. He is fearless and cruel. Just seeing him made me afraid."

These ecstatic remarks, reported by Rauschning, are later brought into still sharper focus:

Just as, at the dawning of a new geological era, the whole world collapses in a gigantic crash, new mountains rise up while gaping abysses open up, and new plains and seas take shape, so will the present structure of Europe be capsized in an immense cataclysm.

The only chance for Germany to resist this pressure will be to seize the initiative and take control of the inevitable upheaval from which will come a new dawning of history.<sup>17</sup>

The gap between the present and the earliest times (or what was so thought to be) having been neatly spanned,



the most difficult part still faced the Nazis: How could the future be predicted? It is here that we encounter a stroke of genius on the part of the masters of the Third Reich; they put a whole magic apparatus (most particularly, astrology) at the disposal of National Socialism.

It has often been said that "to rule is to foresee," but how can one foresee, utilize, and regulate natural evolutions for, as soon as the miracle no longer happens in the temple, or the oracle no longer speaks, scepticism is born and undermines dogma. This spells the end of any civilization so founded. For the Nazis, the example of what they scornfully called "Judeo-Christian civilization" was decisive where this was concerned. We must understand that for Hitler and his disciples, among whom was Rudolf Hess (who was obsessed with Egyptian astrology), astrology and its rebirth as a "sacred art" were laying the groundwork for the white man's rebirth. For them, astrology added a third dimension, as well as a confirmation of the soundness of their cause.

We will not dwell on the case of the necromancer Hanussen,<sup>18</sup> whose story has already been told many times. We would only add a few observations concerning the visible part of this "magic iceberg." It is common knowledge that Hanussen, during one of his public seances, predicted the Reichstag fire and the consecration of Adolf Hitler as Führer of the Third Reich. This prediction signed his death warrant, for this accidental revelation exposed implicitly the real incendiaries. There is no longer any doubt, since the Nuremberg trials, that it was some of Goering's SA men who sneaked into the building and burned it down.

The case of the official magus of Nazism, Rudolf von Sebottendorf, tells us even more about the extent to which the innermost circles of Nazidom fell under the sway of magic. Sebottendorf was considered one of the foremost astrologers of his time, and certain of the works of his disciples on parapsychology are still considered authoritative.

As one of the founders of the notorious Thule Society,

Sebottendorf spared no effort to insure the coming of a racist order under a deified leader. René Alleau, in his work *Hitler and the Secret Societies* (*Hitler et les sociétés secrètes*), quotes the conclusion of Sebottendorf's work which appeared in Leipzig the same year as the abortive Nazi putsch: "And now, go, little book, the hour is propitious! I have begun this preamble the third of February, 1924, at half past midnight, at 46° north latitude and 9° east longitude. Many are they to whom you will bring redemption through true knowledge!"<sup>19</sup>

There is nothing astonishing, therefore, in the fact that all the historical sources allude to horoscopes carefully kept up to date by the regime's official astrologists. For example, Schwerin von Krosigk makes much of the horoscopes predicting war in 1939, victories up to 1941, then uninterrupted defeats until April, 1945, at which time a spectacular turning point in favor of Germany would happen. Trevor-Roper relates in his work *The Last Days of Hitler* the telephone conversation which Goebbels had on April 13 with his commander-in-chief: "My Führer! I congratulate you! Roosevelt is dead. It is written in the stars that the second half of April will mark a turning point for us. We are Friday, April 13. This is the turning point!" And Schwerin von Krosigk, the source for this episode, relates that Hitler said something reassuring, since Goebbels hung up "as though in a state of ecstasy!"<sup>20</sup>

This attraction of the Nazi leaders for occultism and astrology, therefore, must be placed within the context of the Hitlerian cosmogony as a third dimension called upon for clues to the future (not as a substitute for it). It seems to us that numerous interpreters of the Nazi phenomenon have erred in insisting that the occultism and astrology of this period was merely a passing fancy, a whim of some madmen. Once and for all we must stop seeing Nazism as just a political system and in Hitlerian occultism and astrology only a proof of the satanism of these practices. This is de-



fining the cause by the object and the object by the cause. Most of the contemporary writers describe pell-mell the incidental and esoteric facts of Nazism, and they end up with a mystique of the swastika, which is nothing more nor less than an absolute junk-heap of historic pretense.

It is appropriate, therefore, that we assemble the various facts at our disposal and take a fix on our three bearings: the racist Gnosis as political and religious ideal; the mutation of superman, symbolized by the swastika, as concerns science; and finally, magic occultism and astrology as a means of divination and a link with the past.

With the reader constantly bearing these dimensions in mind, we can open the door and penetrate into the labyrinth which has stymied more than one historian.

#### THE FINAL GOAL

"Well, yes! we are barbarians, and barbarians we wish to remain. It does us honor. It is we who will rejuvenate the world. The present world is near its end. Our only task is to sack it." (Adolf Hitler)

This statement brings us back to a text familiar to all: the Apocalypse according to John. It is so true that we cannot help but have noticed a work which would qualify as curious, to say the least: We refer to *The Two Witnesses of the Apocalypse* (*Les Deux Témoins de l'Apocalypse*)<sup>21</sup> of Albert Maillet.

In this work, which compares Hitler and Mussolini, we read: "In waging a material war against Pharisaism, Hitler and Mussolini increased its strength instead of destroying it. Pharisaism can only be destroyed by the power of the spirit." Elsewhere: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall wage war on them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." (Revelation 11:7)

And in Revelation 11:10: "And they that dwell upon the

Earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts one to another because these two prophets tormented them that dwell of the Earth."

Norman Cohn has shown that Nazism drew part of its material from the apocalyptic tradition:

A boundless, millennial promise made with boundless, prophet-like conviction to a number of rootless and desperate men in the midst of a society where traditional norms and relationships are disintegrating—here, it would seem, lay the source of that peculiar subterranean fanaticism which subsisted as a perpetual menace to the structure of medieval society. It may be suggested that here, too, lies the source of the giant fanaticisms which in our day have convulsed the world.<sup>22</sup>

The final goal of the National Socialist movement appears to us, then, in the line of the prophets of these millenaristic movements ("millenum" in the sense of "the deluge") which, still according to Cohn, "claimed to have received the mission of bringing history to its preordained fulfillment."

At this point the puzzle falls neatly into place, for those prophets who most often were announced in a time of catastrophe preached the coming of the reign of the Holy Spirit within the context of a religious mission determined by God. By that very fact (even without the three aforementioned philosophical, scientific, and occult dimensions), the Third Reich appears to us as the application of this millenaristic and prophetic principle, which first manifested itself during the Middle Ages with the approach of the year 1000. Nazism, then, appears as the sign heralding the terrors of the year 2000.



# 10

## The Myth Realized

### SYMBOLS AND EMBLEMS

AS IN EVERY GNOSIS, that is, in every esoteric system, each symbol in National Socialism has a visible meaning and a hidden meaning. Thus, the Nazi colors (black, white, and red) are the official colors of Imperial Germany, as Hitler explained in *Mein Kampf*. But there is an infinitely older esoteric meaning: We have to go back to Manes and his doctrine to find a valid explanation. In the Manichaeon cult, the colors of the priestly vestments were black, red, and white.<sup>1</sup> These concordances cannot be a mere *accident*, for this word has no meaning in history. Facts such as these point to the continuity of a diffuse esoteric element whose historical significance has yet to be appreciated.

The gamma cross is an emblem of much greater significance, which throughout history has a much deeper meaning. The origins of the swastika are lost somewhere in the night of time; so much so, that it can be considered as perhaps the oldest symbol used by mankind. Its oldest meaning has to do with solar symbolism. We find this sign a bit everywhere in the world: in India, Mexico, Palestine, Eu-

rope. It was in all likelihood first brought to our continent by the Druids, who were Great Initiates possessing a knowledge from the Orient. Its being found on altars and in sanctuaries proves that it was the object of a cult. But it is especially in the south of France, particularly in the region of the Pyrenees,<sup>2</sup> that the largest number of gamma crosses has been found. The swastika, Maurice Magre tells us, "stood for the power of time; and when it became an exclusively Buddhist sign, it symbolized the wheel of life to which man is chained and from which he can succeed in freeing himself only through purification."<sup>3</sup> We also find the sign in Germany and Scandinavia, consequently everywhere in Europe. In Basque country the swastika which is displayed on the arms of the city of Bayonne in the form of a cross with commas, its oldest form, has from time immemorial been considered a good-luck sign. All religions, all magics, are based on symbolism. On one point at least, all scholars agree: The swastika is the cross of *movement*.<sup>4</sup> This movement is shown by certain Hitlerian standards where the symbol, instead of being static, clearly suggests the movement of the solar wheel (see Plate No. 14).

For some, the hypothesis is not unreasonable that the swastika is the original instrument used by the Brahmans of India for lighting the sacred fire. For others, it is a symbol which represents at once light, joy, and life moving toward perfection; in a word—energy. Burnouf states that the gamma cross represents certain cosmic phenomena of the heavenly fire, lightning and ray. Wiegfussen sees in it the sign of Theseus, electric discharge, while other authors—among these, the theosophists—assign to the swastika a metaphysical character. For the latter the swastika would have for its origin a mystical sign, the cross.<sup>5</sup>

Our own research has called to our attention still another meaning of the swastika which, on the contrary, would stand for evil, since it concentrates the rays of inferior light, that is, the principle of destruction. This is confirmed by the




dextrogyrate orientation of the sign on the Nazi flag. The Hindu swastika (called *suavastika*) is turned in the opposite direction (sinistrogyrate). Now, if the latter orientation is that of the forces of destiny with whom man allies himself through a covenant assuring protection, the first orientation symbolizes the action of man on destiny and sometimes, against destiny.<sup>6</sup> The swastika can then tap the maleficent forces of the universe and become a sign of catastrophe and death.

We are familiar with another figure, which is the tau reversed. This is a symbol of the power of Thor, the mighty bloodthirsty god of Scandinavian mythology. It is Thor's hammer (Mjolnir) with which this god crushes all his enemies.<sup>7</sup> This hammer always has with it the swastika, which is none other than the symbol of transmutation, and which is found in the hermetic philosopher's square used to explain the genesis of matter.

That Thor's hammer is certainly of Egyptian origin, of hermetic origin, is proven by its form and by the inscription of the symbol of transmutation. But one can also wonder whether the initiate, who brought it in this form from Egypt all the way to the cold Scandinavian countries, did not thereby want to honor Hermes, by giving to the great god of Nordic mythology the name of Thor.

We now come back to the philosopher's square, in use in the Orient in antiquity. We do indeed find the gamma cross within it. The signs which comprise this square are universally known, except for the eighth and ninth signs. They cannot be placed in a different order than that shown:

- (1) subtraction: —
- (2) addition: +
- (3) equivalence: =
- (4) division: —
- (5) multiplication: X

- (6) root: V
- (7) couple: V
- (8) swastika: 
- (9) infinity: ∞

The swastika symbolizes *transmutation*; that is, the changes in form which man can impose on the molecule by the shifting of atoms. In contrast, the ninth sign symbolizes *dissociation*, which consists in liberating the atoms from their molecular prison, from which they come forth to take up once more their journey interrupted during the constitution of matter.

René Guénon, the philosopher of esotericism, writes about this same sign, known in China:

There is a symbol which is in intimate connection with Ying-Yang: This symbol is the double spiral. . . . This double spiral presents the image of the alternating rhythm of evolution and involution, of birth and death; in a word, it represents the manifestation under its double aspect. . . . We can immediately see that this is in close relation with the two rotational movements of the swastika, representing in short the same revolution of the world on its axis, but viewed respectively from the one and the other of the two poles; and these two directions of rotation express in fact the double action of the cosmic force in question, the double action which is basically the same thing as the duality of Ying and Yang under all of its aspects.<sup>8</sup>



Double Spiral

Dextrogyrate  
SwastikaSinistrogyrate  
Swastika

It has also been possible to see in the swastika the cosmic wheel of the hermetic tradition already mentioned. In a ternary rhythm, we can consider three terms: "*deus, homo,*



*rota* ("god, man, wheel"). The third term "*natura*" has been replaced by the word "*rota*" signifying "wheel"; it is this cosmic wheel which is a symbol of the world made manifest, and which the Rosicrucians called "*rota mundi*" ("wheel of the world").

This conception is analogous to that of Scottish operative Masonry, which sees in the letter G the initial of the word "God" whose position is polar and which is the equivalent of the Greek letter Γ which explains the origin of the word "geometry." The bringing together of the four Γ's at right angles in relation to each other forms the swastika symbol, as does also the letter G, of the pole star which is itself the symbol and, for the operative Mason, the effective seat of the central or hidden Sun of the universe, Iah.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting that this emblem is expressed as the central principal which acts upon the world. The notion of the hub is of prime importance here, because the wheel is everywhere the figure of the world accomplishing its rotation about a fixed point—a symbol which cannot help but be compared to the swastika. But in the latter, the circumference which represents the manifestation ⊕ is not completely closed ⊕, so that it is the center of the world which is itself represented. The swastika, therefore, is not a figure of the world, but indeed of the action of the principle concerning the world.

The fact remains that as a ritual object the gamma cross has, in any event, been the principal instrument of the Brahman religion, where it symbolized movement and light. This is the most likely meaning for a sign which was placed at the threshold of all the temples and which is found on the porticos of the famous stupa of Sānchi-Tope.

These different interpretations are so numerous that one could devote an entire work to them. It is certain, however, that in choosing the swastika as an emblem Hitler was aware of the meaning, full of consequences, attached to the use of this symbol.

The central symbol of Nazism, the swastika was at the same time accompanied by other emblems full of meaning, such as the eagle and the runes of which the abbreviation SS is the transcription and which thus has its place in a cosmic vision of the sacred.

The eagle was chosen for its solar symbolism. Thus the Nazi intellectuals believed that for the first Aryan peoples (the tribes of the Arya of Central Asia), who had taken refuge in the mountains, this bird of the summits, was king of the mountains, that is to say, *he who can look right at the Sun*. The eagle was used along with the swastika by the Thule Society. As for the Imperial German eagle, it has a hieratic meaning, which is that of blazonry.

The runes have a different history. Runic art, for it is indeed a sacred art or science, was practiced by the early Germanic peoples well before the medieval period. Thus, there were victory runes, which imparted courage and wisdom and assured all manner of triumphs (which proves that it was not merely a form of writing). Warriors engraved them on the hilt-guards of their swords as the SS would do later on their daggers, thereby linking up again with an old Germanic tradition.

Sea runes were carved on the prow and mast of the vessels, while runes for protection were inscribed in the places used as courts of justice and on the seats used by the magistrates. Runic writing has a double meaning: As a graphic representation, it is a vehicle of thought and language. As a design, it has a sacred meaning, reproducing signs and emblems which only the leaders could interpret correctly. Runes were used in every important act of life to exert a favorable influence and to protect men from charms and evil spells. The Catholic clergy, in the course of the evangelization of the seventh and eighth centuries, fought relentlessly against the use of the runes, which were considered to be of satanic inspiration. Nevertheless when the art of the runes ceased to exist in Christianized Germany, it found



an ideal refuge in Scandinavia, where it peristed vigorously until the sixteenth century. From this date on begins the period of its decline, followed by its almost complete disappearance in the eighteenth century. In giving to the Nazi elite formations the double SS runic sign, it is quite obvious that Hitler wanted to show his attachment to Nordic esotericism.

The magic of symbols whose explanation is reserved for the initiates is one of the distinguishing characteristics of esotericism. Nazism, which is a magic movement, is no exception. Without a doubt we are unaware of a great number of symbols belonging to the highest circles of the SS and which were never revealed to the masses. The partitioning of Hitlerian Germany into three classes explains this lacuna. This division into three degrees, which is characteristic of every Gnosis, deserves some comment.

#### THE THREE DEGREES OF INITIATION

Since initiation consists principally of the transmission of a spiritual influence, it is easily understandable that every initiation functions according to a ternary rhythm intended to illuminate the three worlds: spiritual, psychic, and corporeal. This triple distinction, which Gnosis introduced into the West and which was taken up by the Cathars, is found again in Hitlerism, which is further proof of the relationship between these two Manichaeian movements.

For the Cathars, the ternary Gnostic rhythm provided a triple distinction between the pneumatics (spirit), the psychics (soul), and the hylics (body). Corresponding to this triple distinction was the following internal classification: initiates, adepts, and masses.

In Hitlerism the pneumatics and initiates corresponded to the Führer and the elite (Nazi leaders and SS); the psychics or adepts were represented by the Party; and the hylics were the masses or, if you wish, the nation.

These three degrees of initiation which we have just differentiated (Führer, Party, and German people) are implicitly contained in the motto of the Third Reich: "*Ein Reich—Ein Volk—Ein Führer*." Only the term "*Volk*," which means "people," requires further elucidation.

There is in fact nothing in common between the notion of, say, the French as a people, thought of as the community of citizens forming the body politic, and the German *Volk* which is, in reality, mystical and biological.<sup>10</sup> Hitler in *Mein Kampf* explains himself on this matter: "The *Volk* is something fundamentally different than the sum of individuals. It is a natural fact having a value and a life of its own."

This enables us to understand better the hold of the Führer on his people. Indeed, the bond between Hitler and the German masses was constituted by this mystico-biological mediator which is the *Volk*. It is the latter which effects the coupling between the two poles of initiation. Stated in simple terms, we will say that the masses can be considered as the organic representation of the *Volk*, while the leader speaks in its name<sup>11</sup> and functions as the high priest of the *Volk* whose party (a closed caste) is the Church, the Community of the Adepts.

The birth of this new religion, symbolized by the *Volk* (mythical symbol of the deification of the blood and of the race), could have for dogmas only those belonging to its historical development. The result was that the religion of the Third Reich collided with Christianity, which does not recognize the sharing of Valhalla.<sup>12</sup> The head of the Nazi Labor Front, Dr. Ley, was absolutely categorical on this point: "Our faith, which alone can save us, is National Socialism, and this religious faith does not tolerate any other faith alongside itself."

We should call attention here to an erroneous interpretation of the history of the Third Reich: Because Catholicism was not only a religion but a political party in Germany



(we refer to the "Centrum"), these analysts have chosen to see in the confrontation between Nazism and Christianity a conflict with political undertones in the period preceding the taking of power by the brownshirts in Germany. That is jumping to conclusions and refusing to admit the obvious, that this was a struggle of one religion against another religion.

In this particular case the technique of the Nazis was no different: The only purpose of the Concordat, as far as the Nazi leaders were concerned, was to lull the enemy to sleep in order to eventually destroy him more easily.

It is apparent that, once again, we are dealing with the Manichaeian and purely Gnostic outlook updated to suit the time of which the deification of the *Volk* is one of the dominant traits.<sup>13</sup> Naturally, the German masses found in this nationalism echoing a Pagan past a satisfying philosophy and, initially, a liberal one, since it allowed the old religions to continue to exist. It is here that the whole Hitlerian subterfuge gave itself free rein, for now it had the chance to raise the specter of Marxist atheism in order to reassure the Christians concerning their future. However, in exactly the same way as the Roman Empire which welcomed within it, to be equally venerated, all of the gods, Nazism, in following this line, proved that it did not believe in any god.

The religion of race and of blood (that is, the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*) is, therefore, one of the worst dangers that Christianity has ever had to fight. Let us stress again that the Vatican has remained silent concerning this struggle, to the point that some have thought themselves justified in accusing Pius XII of complicity. This attitude recalls that of the Church concerning the elimination of the Cathars: The conspiracy of silence is most revealing.<sup>14</sup>

It was during this same struggle between the two religions that Hitler introduced the term "positive Christianity" in the Nazi Party platform of 1920. He hoped that

this would give the party a better chance of drawing a significant number of Christians to the new religion of the *Volk*, of which Hitler was high priest. Without a doubt, the inventing of this "positive Christianity" was a stroke of political genius.

The Nazi "positive Christianity" never had any other aim than that of capitalizing on the credulousness of a large number of people whom Hitler wanted to use in order to attain his ends. In the thinking of this nationalistic and Gnostic Christianity, there were positive elements which it was deemed useful to keep, and negative elements which the Nazis rejected (the Old Testament and the Epistles of Saint Paul, in particular).

However, it must be recognized that there were among the Catholics, as among the German Protestants, some people naive enough to appeal to "positive Christianity," in order to protest against the religious persecutions. The official journal of the SS, *Das Schwarze Korps* (*The Black Corps*) put them in their place: "Positive Christianity being a term introduced by National Socialism, only National Socialism is qualified to interpret it."

Thus, contact between the Führer and his people being easily established through the *Volk*, a question can be put forth concerning the role of these three degrees of initiation. The reader will have grasped the considerable significance of this ternary classification and will not be surprised that corresponding to these three degrees of initiation were three teachings which were quite different from one another, but all of which were perfectly adapted to the end in mind.

For the masses, this teaching consisted of the introduction of a crude racism based on anti-Semitism. This simplified and, one might say, visceral doctrine existed only in the virtual state, as a truth experienced whose development was proportionate to the conscience of the individual.

More visible is the elaborate racism taught to the party and its cadres. While the masses, the hylics, are incapable



of emerging from the shadows of ignorance, this is not so for the psychics; they being the "drive-belt" between the masses and the initiates, it was natural that knowledge be imparted to them. A close look at the Nazi Party reveals that it was not a unique party like the others. The NSDAP was the cadre and the driving force which created the state, according to Hitler's own definition. The role of the party was not *only* to govern the state, but also to invest it, in all of its linkages. This dual role of the NSDAP explains its solidity, which seldom faltered, even in the worst moments of crisis, while on the contrary, the Fascist Party flew to pieces once its Duce was arrested. Certain authors have assigned to Martin Bormann much too big a role, in our opinion, calling attention to his talent as an organizer without really knowing what exactly was his role, which is contradictory, to say the least. Here, once more, the link between the initiates and the adepts (as for the Führer and the masses) is effected through the *Volk*: One might say that the state was to the party what the party was to the Führer. This explains why the Third Reich was able to mobilize in record time during its moments of crisis. The entire apparatus of the Hitlerian state was, in fact, backed up by a hierarchy of party servants who made the political decisions. The Nazi Party appears, then, not only as a drive-belt in the manner of the Marxist parties, but equally as an application of the doctrine of progressive initiation. Here again we find the application of an ecclesiastical principle which requires that orders which are spiritual or dogmatic in origin be separated from coarsely material tasks.<sup>16</sup>

This helps to explain why the mistake of lumping together the NSDAP with any other political party cost dearly its enemies of the moment and particularly the Social Democrats and the traditional Right. The only people who, it seems, saw the coming peril were the Communists and the Catholic Centrum, who had perceived the danger posed by this new Gnosis having infiltrated every level of the state's

structure. Thus, political power in Hitlerian thought was only the instrument for bringing about the *Weltanschauung*.

The expression "cathedrals of light" (see Plate 9) describes admirably the National Socialist atmosphere of the period, for the goal was to have an entire people take its communion during the celebration of the ritual at Nuremberg and elsewhere. We have pointed out why the ostentatious displays of Bayreuth are a prelude to those of Nuremberg, and it is this precisely which has prompted many to see in the Third Reich only an episode of German Romanticism. These "people" with their simplistic syntheses fail to see the heart of the problem, that is to say, the establishing of a racist Gnosis with universal appeal, based on three degrees of initiation.

The last degree of initiation, reserved to the initiate alone (that is, the SS leaders, Hitler, Rosenberg, and Hess), dealt with the Gnosis and the esotericism from which Nazism drew its strength and its support.

On this same subject one might well ask if the well-known spiritual exercises, which the Nazi leaders seem to have made the basis of their initiation, were not an attempt to acquire this mysterious force which is the Vril. This is our own hypothesis, for it is apparent that even now, neo-Nazi research tends in this direction. Our attention has, for example, been drawn to an organization which, to say the least, is a strange one, the Grand Lodge of the Vril. Headed by Jean-Claude Monet, a notorious neo-Nazi (he is the founder of a Nordic, proletarian, National Socialist party, the PPNS which has for its rallying sign the swastika), this organization, whose headquarters are in Paris, makes use of certain elements of what indeed appears to be an initiatory teaching. Adopting the tradition of Asgard, which we spoke about in some detail at the beginning of our work, the Grand Lodge of the Vril preaches a fraternal union of West and East by adjoining the Germanic god Wotan and the Chinese of Mao! In any event, what is important is the



platform of politico-mystical action offered to the adepts of this strange sect: "To unite in a same battle [*antiforces noires* = black counter-forces] the most numerous race, the yellow race, with the most capable race, the Nordic blonds." (*Manifesto K.B.L.*, Grand Lodge of the Vrili)

We shall spare the reader the fraudulently esoteric madness of this sect, while calling his attention to the close ties existing from the beginning of the National Socialist movement with the Tibetan Hindus. What, however, can appear surprising is that if the prophets and founders of this movement claimed to be initiates in these oriental traditions, they could not have been unaware of their ultimate fate. For from the standpoint of the sacred, both the Western and the Eastern initiation teach the sacrificial character of these same prophets and founders of religions.

Thus, from its very beginning, the National Socialist movement was by its very mystique committed to total and irrevocable destruction. If its leaders had reflected somewhat more on the Indo-Tibetan tradition, they would have known how all this would inevitably react upon them: The oriental tradition reveals, indeed, that the primordial avatar of the present cycle, which is none other than fire, will come back at the end of the cycle to set the world on fire and reduce it to ashes.

#### THE ORDERS

The creation of the Hitlerian orders proceeds from the concept of "Führerism"; that is, the forming of Führers (leaders) at all levels of the power structure, and even in the minor cogs of the State according to the principle which has throughout history assured discipline in armies: "Whoever has command has, over those below him, an absolute authority; he is, in turn, only responsible to his superiors." (*Mein Kampf*)

The schools for Führers were modeled on this concept. The Ordensburg (castles of the order) were never more than three in number: There were, successively, Krössinsee (in East Prussia), Vogelsang (Rhineland), and Sonthofen (Bavaria). These Germanic castles, resembling both the castle fortress and medieval monastery, were reminiscent of the Krak<sup>17</sup> of the Crusaders, so imposing was their architecture. The setting had been carefully chosen, the three structures standing in the middle of heaths and forests. The Ordensburg were answerable, as to how they were run, to the NSDAP; that is, to the Nazi Party, and not to the famous SS. However, the latter sent professors and students there to complete their political and spiritual training.

It is noteworthy that each of these three fortresses specialized in one unique activity, for from these three establishments was to come an order destined to assure the continuance of the party. It is therefore an error to see in the SS and in the latter alone the future "Supermen" of the thousand-year Reich. Without a doubt, the Black Order of the SS was to be reckoned with, but it represented only one part (albeit an important one) of these future Führers of Hitlerian Europe. As for seeing in Himmler the head of this new order (in lumping it together with the Black Order of the SS), this is to grossly oversimplify the matter and to exaggerate the role and importance of the Waffen SS (Combat SS) of whom only a tiny number (3,000 men by conservative estimate) would be initiated, and then only to a variable extent. Indeed, if we take into account the number of trainees (1,000 boarders being admitted annually in the three castles), we have at the very most 15,000 boarders, of whom the majority would die in combat between 1939 and 1945. In any event and as a general rule, membership in the SS was not obligatory. To apply for admission to the castles, one had to be between the ages of twenty to twenty-six, to have begun to learn a profession or a trade, and especially,



to have given proof of Party loyalty by having more than four years of service in the SA, SS, or in the ranks of the Hitlerjugend.

The selection of applicants was based on the administrative division of Germany into Gaus (provinces [T.N.]). Fewer than 200 young men were designated each year, and only some thirty were chosen in each Gau according to the criteria given above; therefore, among the 1,000 men produced every year by the three Ordensburgen, there were not only SS. The reason for numerous specialists of the history of Nazism saying that prior to 1940 the Ordensburgen were only for the SS was the incorporating during the hostilities of these thousands of fanatical Nazis into the Waffen SS. What is really revealing in this regard are the staggering casualties taken by these formations during the Polish campaign in 1939 due to the inadequacy of their military training. The regular Waffen SS would have been better prepared for the battlefield in the advanced military schools of the classical type, such as Bad Tolz and Braunschweig.

We do not propose to trace here the history of the SS, that Black Order which Heinrich Himmler created and developed in order to satisfy his inferiority complex concerning the regular German Army. It should be pointed out, however, that owing to the force of events, the Black Corps was to take on an increasing importance as a result of the fanaticism of its members and of their unwavering loyalty all through World War II.<sup>18</sup> Their own training was insured beginning in 1938 by a military school of the Waffen SS (with a curriculum including courses on psychological warfare and police science). There were four technical schools for the training of specialists in military intelligence (at Torgau-on-Elbe),<sup>19</sup> for domestic and foreign counterespionage (Bernau, near Berlin), of the Gestapo and of the Commandos (Friedensthal), and finally, for staff officers

with a curriculum analogous to that of the French War College (Drögen).

In an article which appeared in 1936, the Reichsführer SS Himmler defined the role of the Black Corps:

Each of us knows that he is not alone and that this dreaded force of 200,000 men bound by the faith of their oath, gives it an inestimable power. Guided by inalterable laws, we are united and march toward the future. We comprise an indissoluble community . . . a military National Socialist order, made up of men of Nordic background . . . the ancestor of the generations to come and indispensable to the eternal existence of the German people.

In conclusion the high-ranking SS, and they alone, finished their intellectual and political training in the framework of the three Ordensburgen: From 1940 on they were, moreover, to represent the entire complement of the castles, that is, five classes. It should be added that, under the pressure of military events, the intellectual content of the training was progressively reduced to bare essentials.

We have already noted that the Ordensburgen were responsible for giving the same general preparation, in which they were the three links. The specialization of each was as follows:

Krössinsee had for its task the physical and military preparation of the cadres; Vogelsang, their political and spiritual training; and Sonthofen, upper-level professional training for political, diplomatic, and military careers.

It was, therefore, at Krössinsee that the teaching cycle of the future Führers began. In this castle in East Prussia, physical stamina and character were developed. That was in strict obedience to the ethical canons of the future leaders whom Hitler hoped to give his people:

We shall encourage the growth of a violent, domineering, intrepid, cruel, youth. . . . I want there to be nothing weak or tender in it. I want it to have the strength and the beauty of



young, wild animals. I shall accustom it to all kinds of physical exercises. Above all, it must be athletic: That is the most important thing.<sup>20</sup>

At Krössinsee sports began with reveille, at 6:00 A.M., and continued throughout the day under the most varied forms; tough military training alternated with these physical exercises. Character was tempered through lectures and seminars on subversive methods, without regard to moral principles. The sole objective of this first training was to get rid of "bourgeois" conventions, in the full sense of the term. This is the nihilistic phase of the biological selection, the Nietzschean phase in the molding of the Führer candidates.

As for the castle at Sonthofen, the teaching was to the point and aimed at forming political cadres and diplomats, with a view to replacing "reactionary" personnel in these careers and to put into leadership positions trustworthy men, devoted body and soul to their leaders. In this Bavarian castle each candidate improved himself in the particular domain for which he had expressed a preference: politics, diplomacy, or the military. It should be pointed out that all of the ideas, hypotheses, and new systems appearing in the world were studied in relation to the National Socialist concept and in terms of the latter: "The major question for us, in all domains, is to determine whether this thing is good for our race, or if it is likely to harm it. Our masters now are not men who teach; they are men who have lived."<sup>21</sup>

The difference between the castle of Vogelsang and that of Krössinsee is stressed, before 1940, by Alphonse de Chateaubriant: "Vogelsang, because of the nature of things and the type of men there, is the 'knights' monkscloth'; Krössinsee is rather the 'peasants' monkscloth.'" (*La Gerbe des forces*)

This "garb" of the knights consisted, as we have said, in the political and spiritual teaching of the "Schulungsamt-SS," that is, of the educators answerable to the personnel of this corps. (From 1940 onward, moreover, it will constitute

the main part of the professorial staff). It goes without saying that *Mein Kampf* was the axis of this political teaching, although the latter did not limit itself to studying the bible of the Third Reich; quite the contrary. Along with classes in political science and administration went the study of history, biology, and economics, with the primacy of politics over economics. These different programs in history and biology are sufficiently well-known to us so that we can describe them briefly. They will be useful as keys for furthering our investigation of the hidden face of Nazism.

History covered a vast period, starting with the legend of Hyperborea, continuing with an intensive study of the Middle Ages, and ending with the contemporary period (with the official history of the National Socialist movement and of its standard bearer, Adolf Hitler). There were also courses in Far Eastern problems, most particularly on India, China, and Japan. The teaching of history was used to bring biology to support the history of anti-Semitism and racist philosophy envisaged as a whole. The examination of this philosophy included studying the works of Gobineau, H. S. Chamberlain and, particularly, Alfred Rosenberg.

As for anti-Semitism, a derivative of racism, the historical approach endeavored to show the spatial and temporal character of the struggle. Thus, the first millennium, the first deluge, which had seen the disappearance of the continent of Hyperborea had also seen the survival of three tribes which had miraculously escaped the cataclysm: the Ases (ancestors of the modern Aryans), the gypsies, and the Hebrews. History as taught at Vogelsang spared no effort to prove the treason of the gypsies (through the analysis of their "complex of collective guilt") and the peril that the Jews, modern descendants of the Hebrew tribe, represented for the Aryans.

The parallel was constantly drawn between the Jewish and Aryan races: The goal of these two races was the same, domination of the universe through the purification of the



race and its messianic development within the framework of a militant theocracy and the absolute preservation of ancestral customs. The SS educators, who were totally fanaticized, reviewed the history of Jehovah's people, showing how, in spite of 2,000 years of uninterrupted persecutions, it had been able to survive and move forward. It was, therefore, the task of the Aryan race to follow this example and, at the same time, to sweep away these dangerous rivals for earthly supremacy, for the hour of the great biological mutation was about to come, with genetic and scientific discoveries toppling the world order and heralding the cyclical cataclysm foreseen by all the illuminated, both the prophets of the Middle Ages and those of National Socialism. It was absolutely essential that Germany take the lead in the evolution in order to perpetuate the species and to develop it.

But there was also an old account to settle with those who had "betrayed" the Hyperborean civilization: the gypsies. Besides, the latter were deeply antisocial, according to the National Socialist thinkers, for they had spied on both sides during World War I. It was advisable, therefore, to rid Germany and Europe of this alien presence, which carried everywhere the poison of treason, as proven by this collective guilt complex which they could not shake off and which remained stuck to them during their endless wanderings. The gypsies, responsible for the first flood, will bring on the second. The gypsy legend, the story handed down from generation to generation, says that this tribe, condemned to wander indefinitely and unable to settle in the Americas, will herald the end of time, when it begins to settle down permanently.<sup>22</sup>

Wearers of a brown triangle on their striped concentration camp uniforms, more than 750,000 gypsies lost their lives in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau, victims of the politico-historical cosmogony of the Austrian scientist Hörbiger.

As for the rest of the teaching at Vogelsang, outside of the spiritual exercises and scientific biology, very little is known to the experts who have analyzed National Socialism, for the initiation of the Führers went by degrees, and the supreme knowledge of Aryan truth was not to be imparted to all of the castle's boarders.

We aver that Hitler the Cathar answers the question by furnishing us the piece of the puzzle which was lacking for our complete understanding of the Hitlerian cosmogony. Everyone recognizes that the intellectual level of a Hörbiger or of a Haushofer was unusually high, and that the instructors at Vogelsang (such as Otto Rahn) showed themselves to be of a rare brilliance in those areas of study for which they were responsible. But the eternal question has remained since 1945: What was this keystone of the Hitlerian cosmogony which drove these men to going "beyond good and evil"? What was the driving force, the mold from which came those responsible for the new order?

In the weekly paper *Carrefour* (*Crossroads*) of January 6, 1960, Jacques Nobécourt, journalist and historian, stated concerning the arrest of Professor Heyde in Germany (he had been responsible for the euthanasia of the mentally ill of the Reich):

The hypothesis of an initiatory community, subjacent to National Socialism, has compelled recognition little by little. It is a truly demoniacal community, governed by hidden dogmas much more elaborate than the elementary doctrines of *Mein Kampf* or the *Myth of the 20th Century*, and served by rites whose rare traces pass unnoticed, but whose existence seems unquestionable for analysts.

We are in complete accord with this assessment, and in spite of the disappearance of documents concerning the initiatory teaching of the upper cadres of the SS, we can easily reconstitute, in the light of these explanations, the



piece of the magic puzzle necessary to understand the phenomenon. Our explanation has the merit of bringing together, around German research on the origins of the white "race" up to the Middle Ages in general and at Montségur in particular, the assemblage—historical, cultural, and esoteric—of the Nazi *Weltanschauung*.

No serious author has ever raised the question, however fundamental, of knowing why the *Crusade Against the Grail* and *Lucifer's Court in Europe* of Otto Rahn, SS colonel, and member of the Ahnenerbe<sup>23</sup> (highest organ of SS research), had been made required reading by Himmler for the ranking officers of this new Teutonic knighthood, thereby conferring on these works the authority of gospels. The fact of making them required reading proves that they contained the key to the Hitlerian cosmogony, if only one were to take the trouble to look for it.

That unusual reporter, Alphonse de Chateaubriant, spoke to the initiates of these new gospels when he wrote more than thirty years ago on being admitted to the immense dining hall of Vogelsang:

All this whiteness was due to an array of a thousand immaculate place settings, each enveloped in its impeccable napkin, folded in the shape of a flower, while near each glass, in its crystal vase, reposed in its vast flowering bloom a large satiny, shiny, royal marguerite, reflecting its white light, much like some work of art from the sublime workshop of the magicians of Meissen. . . .<sup>24</sup>

Have no doubt about it, you will get through this admittedly inadequate and colorless description, a much-diminished but nonetheless authentic impression of this unusual fact: Such a candid, pure whiteness and such a flowering cultivated by these thousand young men, says a great deal, in this age of defilements, concerning the worthiness of blood and soul brought by this people rising up to become an unwavering force. It says much about what is taking shape in the German soul, about what of themselves they want to save by themselves, *wresting themselves from control of the demoniacs, from the beings who, once, deserved*

*or brought on the flood*. It says a great deal about what the continuity of this flower of purity, proclaimed in the myths of its race, meant to the German soul.

As for myself, before this perfect whiteness in whose midst are gathered these thousand young knights of Vogelsang, I cannot keep from thinking about *the souls of Lohengrin and of Parsifal, of seeing in these two purities a relationship of thousand-year-old faithfulness and of indestructible lineage, of seeing that through the same blood, the purity of legend and the purity of the new man stem from the same branch of the tree of God. (La Gerbe des forces)*<sup>25</sup>

In the light of these lines, we believe that everything falls into place around the central theme of the Grail and around a certain initiation brought by some "Unknown Superiors" (to use a current term), who in all likelihood came from India or Tibet. The presence of a Tibetan colony in Berlin and the role of the Vril Society are of prime importance in any attempt to reconstruct the first Hitlerian initiation.

We believe that, subsequently, Adolf Hitler and his disciples cast off this Oriental influence, or oriented themselves (possible on directive from these same Unknown Superiors) toward a distinctly western approach to the question of the knowledge of man's destiny. All of this is substantiated by historical fact and by the loss of influence suffered by the Führer's first supporters. In any event, whichever one of the three hypotheses one chooses—opposition, continuation, change in orientation—all the tracks lead to the symbolism of the Grail.

But before drawing a conclusion which is as close to reality as possible, it will be useful to have a look at the bible of the Nazi philosophers and their prophet, Alfred Rosenberg and his *The Myth of the 20th Century*. One wonders whether this myth did not become reality in the last months of World War II, whose most mysterious events will help to prove our hypotheses.



### ROSENBERG AND THE MYTH OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

National Socialism is tied to its Weltanschauung. It exists through it and will disappear with it. (Alfred Rosenberg)

Lost in the mists of idealism, Rosenberg remained so until the very end. Even as he was about to be executed at Nuremberg in 1946, he still considered National Socialism as "the most noble idea to which a German might dedicate himself," although he repudiated the horrors which had been committed as unbelievable falsification of the pure doctrine.

However that may be, Rosenberg was really the brains behind the Nazi Gnosis. Born in Talinn (formerly Reval), Estonia, in 1893 of a Germano-Balt family, young Rosenberg attended the Petri-Real Schule in that city, where he was always at the head of his class. He then went to the Advanced Technical Institute of Riga and finally to Moscow University, where in 1918 he received his degree as an architect.

Fleeing the Revolution and the Soviet regime which he detested, Rosenberg, like many Germano-Balts, found refuge in Germany. He sought out the company of Russian exiles, among whom were numerous adepts of theosophy. Through them he was introduced to the Thule Gessellschaft. Its name "Thule" was bound to appeal to the young Balt, fascinated as he was by German mythology. Dietrich Eckart, already a member of that notorious secret occult society, immediately noticed this intellectual, whose culture set him apart from the mediocrity of most of the others. Shortly thereafter, Eckart introduced Rosenberg to Hitler, who was just getting started in politics. The refugee from Curland was among the first to join the NSDAP, and his influence was decisive in shaping the spiritual outlook of the future master of Germany, whose anti-Semitism and taste for the

mysterious he intensified even more. The orientation of his first works (*The Jew Throughout History* (1920), *The Amoralism of the Talmud* (1921?), and *The Crime of Freemasonry* (1921?))<sup>26</sup> tell us a great deal about what he had in mind. Rosenberg was one of the first in Germany to propagate the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (a work acknowledged to be spurious)<sup>27</sup> which he published in 1923 along with a commentary. His superabundant literary output very soon won him recognition as the party's philosopher. Having participated in the abortive putsch of November 9, 1923, he was entrusted by Hitler, then serving time at Landsberg Prison, with the leadership of the movement, sufficient proof of how much he was thought of. Hanfstaengl, who welcomed Hitler into his home upon the latter's release from prison, relates that the Führer could not find praise enough for Rosenberg, saying notably, "Fifty years from now, his mystique will perhaps be acclaimed as one of the highest achievements of philosophy." When he resumed leadership of the party, Hitler turned over to Rosenberg the editorship of the NSDAP's daily organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter* (*The People's Observer; Voice of the People* [TN.]) whose circulation climbed constantly during the following years.

In 1930, Rosenberg's endeavors reached their high point with the publication of his major work, *The Myth of the 20th Century*, which, according to a bibliography of that time, was "with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, the most important work on National Socialism."<sup>28</sup> The book eventually sold one million copies, no small achievement.

*The Myth of the 20th Century* is shot through with mysticism and, in Hitler's own words, "most lofty thought." The work casts doubts on all of history, starting with the origins of Christianity, and substituting for the latter a vision and a philosophical interpretation based on the "eternal laws of the Aryans." The book is intended to be a reply "to the obscurantists of our time," in its author's words. The myth



is based on the notion of race and on the mystery of blood, along with an underlying esotericism which is often not all that evident.

Rosenberg has often been accused of having written an anti-Christian tract. Of course, the author attacks the Catholic Church, but he makes a distinction between the origin of a doctrine and its application. The judgment is more mitigated than one might expect: "As for the personality of Jesus Christ, right after his death, it was deformed, recast with all the hotchpotch of Asiatic, Judaic, and African thinking." For Rosenberg, Jesus was very likely not of Jewish stock. The writer believes with Ephraim (a preacher of the fifth century) that the mother of Jesus was a woman of the tribe of Dan, while his father was a Latin. He would therefore be of Syrian and Roman origin.<sup>29</sup>

It was Paul who, making use of this early Christian movement, "armed with an uncontrollable fanaticism, preached world-wide revolt against the Roman Empire." He wanted to reconcile Judaism and the Roman spirit. *The Gospel of John*, "which betokens a feeling which is still aristocratic" shows on the contrary a reaction against this degeneracy. In about A.D. 150, the Greek Marcion (a Gnostic) rejects the Old Testament and supports the Nordic idea of "a society based on collective effort and on a hierarchy opposed to the Semitic concept of a despotic divine power and its limitless tyranny." The earliest Christian dogmas (Trinity; Christ born of a virgin) are of Eastern origin and give evidence of an astonishing kinship between an abstract spiritualism and black magic. Finally, Christianity came not from the life of Jesus, but from "his death and its strange consequences, the sole reason for the epistles of Paul." There is negative Christianity and positive Christianity. The second has to do with the image of the living Jesus; the first, with that of Jesus crucified.

Thus, Rosenberg does not consider Christianity in its origins to be an enemy, since he exalts the person of the living

Christ, but following the example of the Gnostics to whom he is related by numerous affinities, he rejects what he considers to be an Oriental hoax, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ. Let us note in passing his unconcealed admiration for the Johannite Gospel to which the Cathars constantly referred.

However, his hatred of the Church as a social entity is vented with a growing violence. The idea of a single, universal Church determining and coordinating the entire life of the state (all of science, art, and morality, in the name of dogma) is simply "a residue of those ideas of chaos of the peoples which have poisoned our being." Opposed to this conception was Martin Luther, who advocated in lieu of the "universal, political monarchy of the Pope, the idea of national politics."

For the philosopher, all events are significant and render an account of the eternal struggle, which in this world pits the forces of light against the forces of darkness. In this perspective all heretics and, consequently, the Cathars above all, are considered the heroes of a tragedy of cosmic dimensions.

This struggle led by the Germano-Nordic elements of Europe against Roman universalism, against domineering Catholicism, "was of gigantic proportions"; in the history of the Albigensians, Waldensians, Cathars, Huguenots, Reformed, and Lutherans, must be seen the stirring tableau of an epic struggle.

France notably, "today so degenerate," was from north to south the scene of heroic battles which brought forth the bravest of the brave:

Who today, among educated people, really knows anything about Toulouse of the Goths, whose ruins tell us a thousand things about a proud mankind? Who has heard about the great feudal families of this city, who were wiped out, exterminated in the course of bloody wars? Who is familiar with the history of the Counts of Foix, whose castle is now but a mass of ruins,



whose villages are deserted, whose lands are inhabited only by some wretched peasants . . . The sole vestige of Visigoth rule is to be found in the only major school of French Protestantism, Montauban.

This fiery declaration, which takes up the cudgels for the Romany of the Cathars, is very close to the viewpoints expressed by Otto Rahn in his book *Crusade Against the Grail*. They show a familiarity with problems concerning Aquitaine, which would put to shame many a Frenchman. But what he says should not surprise us, and we can only note that Rosenberg's viewpoint approximates that of a French writer of the stature of Maurice Magre, author of *Blood of Toulouse*, who writes in *The Treasure of the Albigeois*:

The land of Toulouse, that which extends from Carcassonne with its stone towers to the Pyrenees of the Counts of Foix and beyond to the Abbey of Comminges, is the most sacred. It was to this place once upon time, that the Celto-Iberians whose ankle-length hair they wore twisted at the nape of the neck, had brought the mystical treasure of Delphi. On the inaccessible mountains of Ariège,<sup>30</sup> the Druids had hidden the Greek symbols, which enabled them to deduce events on earth from the geometry of the stars. It was to Carcassonne that Alaric<sup>31</sup> had brought this *Table of Solomon, this treasure of original thought which the Goths had seized at Rome* and which came from the Temple of Jerusalem. . . . I call out to the Albigensian saints who received the wisdom of the East and to the inspired troubadours who were initiated by the birds of the Pyrenees.<sup>32</sup>

Rosenberg also sees initiation as being peculiarly Eastern, the East being the ancestral home of the Aryans. He brings in successively the India of the Brahmans, Buddhism, and the history of Persia; but in his eyes, people falsify Hindu philosophy when they claim it to be full of gentleness and to teach that compassion is the highest virtue. If we go back further than Buddhism and even beyond Brahmanism, we find very different ideas. In the oldest Hin-

du poems, in certain parts of the *Mahabharata*, duty and honor are placed above everything else:

The Aryan Hindu has endowed the world with a metaphysics whose profundity has never been equalled. . . . *The Aryan Persian has assembled a religious myth whose vigor still nourishes all of us even today:*<sup>33</sup> Doric Hellas extracts through a dream the beauty of this world such as it has never existed even in its perfection; Italian Rome has given us an example of the formal discipline of the state, showing how a threatened human community must organize and defend itself.

Rosenberg stresses the notions of liberty and honor, which for him are the cornerstones of Germanic character, liberty conceived as the possibility of seeking the construction of an image of the world, a purely religious sentiment. The external liberty of which we make so much today means abandoning the nations to chaos.

According to Rosenberg, the Germanic Nordic soul rejects the static concept of a single god ruling over the universe. It breaks with the Old Testament, faithful in this regard to the spirit of Luther, who rather late had "freed himself from the Jews and from their lies" and had declared that "we no longer have anything to do with Moses." *It has a horror of philosophical monism* and of "this ecclesiastical thickheadedness which was imposed on it later by the technical and diplomatic supremacy of Rome; it makes a distinction between the world of liberty and that of nature, and rejects miracles in the material sense of the term, magic, thaumaturgy, and particularly the legendary side of Christianity; it is opposed to the Old Testament and to all that is symbolized by Nicaea,<sup>34</sup> which was the work of a majority of monks who for the greater part knew neither how to read nor write. It struggles against the priests with "the insurgent from Nazareth," who pronounced words such as the following: "I have come not to bring Peace, but the sword. I want to start a fire on the Earth and I would wish that it were already burning."



Rosenberg believed that this revelation of Jesus was not made for just one occasion, but *for always*; it justifies the unending struggle for man's becoming. The Occident has not allowed this vitalism to be taken from it by the Roman Church, in spite of excommunications, prisons, and pyres. This mystical vitalism was at the same time cosmic, or inversely, it was because the German had cosmo-solar sensations that he discovered the governing principles behind the eternal becoming on earth.

And perhaps it was precisely this deep-seated feeling which enabled the German to construct the necessary forms of science and create a symbolism of ideas, which alone gave him the means for bringing it to the very edge of *the river which flows eternally*.

Echoing the Cathar doctrine on yet another point, the author considers that the sacraments are the clear manifestation of magic in Christian doctrine and should be rejected.

He also describes the origin of the swastika, one of the symbols of the Nordic gods, symbols attached to the idea of the Sun, of the fecundating life beginning to stir. Since well before the year 3000 B.C., the waves of Nordic people thus carried it (as well as the lance, the halo, and the ordinary cross) to Greece, Rome, and the Indies.

"To describe this effort, to move into the realm of world politics the magico-demoniacal conception of the sorcerer concerning the universe, is to write the history of the Roman Church and of its dogmas."

The *historical struggle between emperor and pope* takes on a new light when one considers it as a battle for supremacy between knightly honor and the effeminate doctrine of love. Rosenberg considers the Christian notion of love to be exactly opposite the true Greek notion, notably that of Plato.

Finally, death cannot be considered, as Christianity would have it, as the wages of sin: It is, on the contrary, a simple natural phenomenon "which does not disturb our

eternity *which was before and which will continue to be after.*"

We have here beliefs which identify with those of the Gnostics and the neo-Platonic school of Alexandria. At the risk of astonishing, let us say that history is a perpetual recommencement. At the same time that he was publishing *The Myth of the 20th Century*, Rosenberg wrote *The Mystique of Master Eckhart*,<sup>35</sup> a work in which he lavishes praise on the philosophy of the Rhenish mystic and his unnamed god. A short while thereafter, Rosenberg founded the "Group for the Protection of German Culture" which, according to Joachim Fest,<sup>36</sup> was to be "the basis of an organization having for its purpose the realization of the racist canons of beauty, by means of which could be openly launched, with all means available to the power of the state, the offensive against the bastardizing mongrelization of degenerate art." From 1933, the Reich's Office for the Promotion of German Literature and the National Socialist Cultural Federation were headed by Rosenberg, which gives us some idea of the role played by him in the cultural orientation of Nazi Germany. In 1940, he was named Hitler's delegate to the Association for the Safeguarding of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, protector of orthodoxy within the Party and youth organizations. One of the tasks of this association was to select those works to be used in the SS Ordensburgen.

At the same time, Rosenberg was Deputy for Occupied Europe. In this capacity, he went to France with the mission of establishing contact (he spoke French fluently) with those French intellectuals already well disposed toward National Socialism. Within the framework of his propaganda mission, he gave a lecture at the Palais-Bourbon in which he declared:

The great National Socialist revolution is not an ephemeral act of military power based only on a weak, popular support. We



are firmly convinced that 1940 has seen a historical decision comparable to that which, a thousand years ago, brought Christianity to the heart of Europe and determined the external forms of life. . . . The 300-year-old struggle in Europe between gold and blood, between the eighteenth century and the twentieth century, will end with the victory of blood. . . . Out of chaos, misery, and shame, has risen the racial ideal which is opposed to internationalism. The victory of this ideal in all domains is the true world revolution of the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup>

The victory of blood Rosenberg was prophesying was as wrong as his conception of the world. It was defeated at the same time as Nazism. He himself did not by any means escape the justice of the victors: he was hanged right alongside the other war criminals.

#### THE EVENTS

On January 30, 1933, the prophecy of Joachim de Flore became twisted reality: The reign of the Holy Spirit was prevailing in Germany; Adolf Hitler and his disciples had taken power and intended indeed to keep it until the millennium, until the next deluge. The Nazi's earthly "paradise" would take special pains to make its enemies knuckle under and to settle old accounts with the Marxist materialists as well as the Jewish and Christian "false spiritualists." A new era was beginning, which would last twelve years and leave its imprint on the entire world. Henceforth, a single question was on everyone's lips: "What was Hitler going to do?" He was impatient to accomplish his task, which, he believed, God had personally mandated to him. Upon moving into his office in the chancellery, he had been heard to say: "Now no power in the world will make me leave here alive!" In this, at least, he kept his word.

Meanwhile, the Führer of the Third Reich set the stage for his future actions: On February 27, 1933, his main political adversaries, the Communists, saw their fate irrevocably sealed with the burning of the Reichstag. On March

22 of the same year, Hitler assumed full power and withdrew from the League of Nations. The political armistice with the German Catholics was brought to its fulfillment in the signing of the Concordat, July 20, 1933. The death of the aging Marshal von Hindenburg on August 2, 1934, marked the definitive founding of the new regime through the elimination of its last opponents and the putting into effect of the policy of racial purification.

Röhm's<sup>38</sup> SA had been the first victim, but the army did not escape the purges which culminated in the assassination of General von Schleicher, Minister of the Reichswehr. A similar fate struck the Reichstag on July 14, 1934; the European diplomatic corps saw itself "lectured" on the death of the king of Yugoslavia and the French minister Louis Barthou (at Marseilles, October 9, 1934).

Europe witnessed the scrapping of the Versailles Treaty and the rearmament of Hitlerian Germany. The racial persecutions shocked the world. By means of a law of July 14, 1933, the racial courts of the Reich were already empowered to protect the Aryan race from the possible defilement of the mentally ill: The sterilization of the latter preceded the euthanasia killings of the 270,000 "sick" of the Third Reich, by means of the euthanasia decree of September 1, 1939. This foreshadowed the extermination of the gypsies, Jews, and other "enemies of society." Hitler had declared before taking power: "I have the right to exterminate millions of individuals of inferior races, which multiply like vermin." Hitler had sworn an implacable hatred for the Jews upon his failing the entrance exams for admission to the Vienna Fine Arts Academy,<sup>39</sup> and lost no time in putting into practice the theories of Nietzsche and of Chamberlain on racial purification. He reserved for the Jews a "final solution," whose atrociousness and horror will forever be present in the conscience of the world. This fiend, who frequently ended his speeches with the word "Amen," did not hesitate to send millions of human beings to the gas



chambers and crematory ovens without the least remorse or pity.

"I hold the world in my grip," Hitler declared in 1939. Everywhere, people were admiring the head of the New Germany and in 1938 even Winston Churchill said: "If England were to flounder in anarchy, I would pray to God to send her a man of Hitler's merit!" Likewise, the ecclesiastical authorities and the official governments never raised a single protest against the atrocities of which the Nazis were guilty. It took the Danzig Corridor affair to succeed where the persecutions had failed, that is to say, the declaration of war in September, 1939. Henceforth, the Manichaeian character of the struggle was there for all to see: Good and evil confronted one another behind the clash of arms and raging combat. These two conceptions of the world which stood face to face were irreconcilable and challenged each other ferociously, but it was not until much later that the world became aware of the danger from which it had escaped. For this, the swastika had to fly over three quarters of Europe and millions of dead had to prove what the stakes were. "We will never capitulate," Hitler had announced to his people, and his people followed him into the greatest military and political defeat that a nation has ever known. Today, nothing remains of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*; the "Thousand Year Reich" has sunk into the sands of history without giving up its secret. For it does indeed seem that in this titanic struggle where all energies had been concentrated on both sides, magic would have its word in the luciferian camp.

This use of magic as a weapon in World War II appeared to be an invention of irresponsible historians until the discovery of new elements tending to confirm the thesis. These new elements cluster around three events which are mysterious, to say the least: the discovery of a spiraling politics grown out of the Hitlerian geopolitics, the departure of Rudolf Hess in the middle of the war for Great Britain, the

conquest of Mount Elbrus in the Caucasus and its true significance.<sup>40</sup>

First, the spiraling politics which said that "the living space of the Third Reich can be enlarged only by moving out from a powerful territorial hub and by accomplishing this conquest progressively, step by step, following the accelerating movement of a spiraling dextrogyre."<sup>41</sup> This spiraling politics which followed the swastika even in the movement of its rotation—clockwise—was intended to make even the most ordinary soldier at the front participate in the expansionist and magical mystique of its leaders.

The departure of Hitler's heir-apparent, Rudolf Hess, for England on May 10, 1941, also figures in this mystical and magic concept of making war. The reason for his trip is found, as has often been stated, in a meeting which Hess had with Karl Haushofer: The latter gave him addresses of members in England of the Golden Dawn (the British equivalent of the German Vril Society) and also furnished him with names of persons likely to be favorably disposed to the mission: the Duke of Hamilton, the Duke of Bedford, and Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick.

The fact of the matter is that upon his arrival on English soil, Hess asked to see these men, which is why Winston Churchill had him hidden and kept him from communicating with the outside, in order not to impede the Cabinet's prosecution of the war. What appears surprising is the plot to remain silent concerning the prisoner of Spandau—today a prison of 200 cells for one prisoner! Hess cannot write his memoirs and has gone completely mad as a result of the rigorous treatment he has had to endure. The unofficial explanation according to which the Russians are still opposed even now to his being released simply won't hold water. The Soviet Union would like, in so doing, to punish Hess for having tried to make peace with England behind the back of the U.S.S.R., which Hitler was to attack a few



months after his deputy's escapade. As a matter of fact, there is no longer any doubt that London had established contact with Berlin through the good offices of Sweden,<sup>42</sup> as early as June 17, 1940.

The foreign minister was at that time Lord Halifax, former right arm of Neville Chamberlain (British prime minister at the time of the Munich crisis), and it was Churchill, a sly fox when it came to politics, who took advantage of the situation to muzzle his pacifist ministers and thus to buy time; Russia's entry into the war was believed to be imminent. Churchill wanted to prosecute the war as long as Germany had not pulled back from the occupied territories and to counter the English Nazis or sympathizers who had infiltrated his government. We know today, that in disagreement with Hitler's policies from 1934 on, numerous members of the Thule Society had gone to bring the good word to London and to Oxford, where they subsequently took up permanent residence. The first order of business of these exiles had been to make contact with the British Golden Dawn, to which a number of highly placed persons belonged; Karl Haushofer, former member of the German Vril Society, knew of this, and he could, therefore, pass it on to Hess. It is altogether conceivable that Hess' close friend, Albrecht Haushofer (Karl's son), was an adept of white magic and kept his protector up to date on the contacts which the latter had entrusted him with undertaking (right in the middle of the war) with the Duke of Hamilton; the latter received Hess' messages, which had been transmitted via young Haushofer, but wisely decided not to reply. It was then that Hess made up his mind to take the plunge and proceed to England. What came of it is no secret: Hess is insane; Albrecht Haushofer was beheaded at Moabit Prison by the Gestapo because he knew too much; Hamilton and Bedford have been mute ever since, considering what they would have been able to reveal concerning the Golden Dawn and its activities prior to the declaration of

war. Let us note finally that Karl Haushofer was not in the least worried after the defeat of Germany, as if he were under some occult protection. His suicide in 1946 threw a veil over this magic episode of the Battle of Britain.

Spiraling politics of the Third Reich, the departure of Hess for London, the dispatching of a mission to Languedoc and another to Tibet—these are mysteries which doubtless will never be completely cleared up as to their outcome. But what about that expedition, right in the middle of the war, on the Caucasus Front, during which on August 21, 1942, at 11 A.M., the swastika flag was planted on the highest peak of the Caucasian range, Mount Elbrus.

We come here again to the Hitlerian cosmogony, which wanted to see in the people of the Ases the survivors of the first deluge (after the disappearance of the continent of Hyperborea) and specifically, the ancestors of the Aryan peoples. This tribe of the Ases would supposedly be found "at the point where the course of the Volga and of the Don come closest," according to the old Nordic sagas; it was said that the Ases had been driven from their kingdom by Asiatic tribes and had then settled on the shores of the Baltic.

These legends help us to better understand the Nazi persecutions of the gypsies, when we consider that the latter were nomads and the Germans a sedentary people. The Hitlerians had strong feelings about the incompatibility of a people attached to a land with migrant people, just as they were familiar with the unceasing struggle which in ancient times saw the white Iranians representing the world of stability pitted against the yellow Turanians representing the world of the steppes. It was finally the latter who would triumph in the East, after the final downfall of the Persian Empire and the Turkish invasion. We are back once again with the same dualistic conception of the struggle between good and evil, or of light against darkness, a dualism opposed to Christian monism. In this the neo-Paganism



of the Nazis was only following a constant impulse in the history of the western peoples, periodically shaken by violent crises of religious revolts against the established order.

We, therefore, see that Hitler's desperate eagerness to conquer and hold Stalingrad and the Soviet republics of North Ossetia (capital: Ordzhonikidze) and of South Ossetia (capital: Tchkhivali) as well as their holy city, Asgardr,<sup>43</sup> had its origins in the initiation, which as a boy at Lambach Abbey he received in 1908 at the hands of the Cistercian monk Joseph Lanz (future founder of the Hyperborean and anti-Semitic periodical *Ostara*). The initiation was renewed subsequently within the Thule Society, whose philosophy was but a development of the theses contained in *Ostara*.

The personal order of the Führer to the two regiments of mountain infantry to plant the swastika on the summit of the magic mountain of the Ases, Mount Elbrus, assumes here its tremendous significance. This should be situated within the mystico-historical context of the Hitlerian *Weltanschauung*: the eternal return to the origin of human destiny, the eternal return to the continent of Hyperborea.

# 11

## Catharism and Hitlerism

### HITLER'S PERSONALITY

HITLER'S PERSONALITY has always been an enigma, even for his closest collaborators; how much more so for those historians seeking to paint a true portrait of the master of the Third Reich.

Hitler has been described variously as a madman, a genius, a criminal, a man possessed of the devil, or even as a petit bourgeois,<sup>1</sup> which is, it must be admitted, paradoxical.

The truth is that Hitler had a complex nature, difficult to assess and thwarting every set definition. The very notions of good and evil no longer make any sense when they are applied to such a person whose strangeness still puzzles any number of people. What is certain are the prophetic, mystical, and visionary aspects of this modern sorcerer, who could also present to the world the hideous face of a cynic, of a hard, unfeeling being capable of sending to his death without the slightest scruples anyone who might get in his way.

Everyone is aware of the prodigious gifts of this orator



preaching the new gospel of the Aryans, renewing with a disquieting intuition the medieval eloquence of the mystical prophets and luminaries. Did he not refer in *Mein Kampf* to the magic power of the verb? When he spoke to crowds, Hitler fell into a veritable trance, a mediumistic communication which flowed out to his audience, toward the mass from which he received in return energy, as a battery receives electric current. He was, no doubt about it, the "*Trommel*," Germany's drum, as he liked to call himself.

"This man," wrote Otto Strasser in *Hitler and I*,<sup>2</sup> "who, like a sensitive membrane which records the vibrations of the human heart, was able, with an intuition that no conscious gift could replace, to make himself the sounding-board of our most secret desires, of instincts often the least acknowledgeable, of the intimate sufferings and revolts of his people."

If Hitler was this successful in mesmerizing the German people, he doubtless owes it to his Bavarian origins. Southern Germany is a hotbed of mediums—Stockhammer, the Schneider brothers, and other occultists known throughout the entire world were born, like Adolf Hitler, in the little town of Braunau-am-Inn.

In the private talks he had with the celebrities of his time, the dictator had this same power of fascination. One of his secretaries noted the fact:

Whenever Hitler spoke, whether with just one person or before a crowd, this gift always showed itself to have the same intensity. He literally fascinated people, and imposed his will [on them]. . . . He released that magnetic fluid which brings us close to people or, on the contrary, alienates us from them. . . . It was this extraordinary power of suggestion which explains how men who in a state of desperation had come to see him, left swollen with confidence.<sup>3</sup> (*Twelve Years with Hitler*)

At the Nuremberg trials Marshal von Blomberg's testimony will confirm these remarks, which at first appearance might seem highly exaggerated:

It was almost impossible to contradict Hitler, not only because he always spoke with an extreme volubility and great violence, but also because he had, man to man, such radiance that you were more or less forced to follow him and share his ideas. He was absolutely the same, whether speaking to just one man or to a million. He swept you along with him and convinced you in spite of yourself. His personal magnetism was tremendous. He had an enormous power of suggestion.

Keitel could say: "Hitler was tremendous at moving people." How did he exercise this power? Was it his voice, that harsh torrent rolling over the boulders of the Austrian Alps, or that blue-eyed gaze, which could either make people tremble or be charmed. Alphonse de Chateaubriant described his eyes as "of the deep blue of the waters of his lake at Königsee, when the lake, all around Sankt Bartholoma, reflects the mighty crevasses striated with clouds of his Tyrol." The historian Benoist-Méchin, who saw him close up in 1941, was struck by this strange look:

As for his eyes—two eyes so strange that at first they were all that I saw—they were of a clear, transparent blue, striated with gray. One might have said that they were empty as though lifeless. But very quickly you changed your mind. What made them seem empty was their motionlessness. You might have said that his pupils, instead of observing the outside world, were turned inward and followed a drama unfolding somewhere deep within him. Unlike most people, who look at you—or even through you—the chancellor had a way of looking at you which drew you to him, and swept you into his hidden interior. You felt a sort of dizziness, which it took some doing to shake off.

Because of these observations and the testimony of several who knew him, various people came to the conclusion that Hitler was manipulated by invisible forces, those "Unknown Superiors" mentioned by Hermann Rauschning. Endowed with an extraordinary willpower, Hitler apparently slipped through the hands of his initiators and, like the golem<sup>4</sup> of the Middle Ages, turned against his creators.



If we can believe Rauschning, Hitler was in contact with some mysterious beings who were terrorizing him:

Someone close to him told me that he woke up nights shouting convulsively. He yells for help. Sitting on the edge of his bed, he is as though paralyzed. He is seized with a panic which makes him tremble so violently that the bed shakes. He utters confused, unintelligible vociferations. He gasps for breath as though about to suffocate. The same person told me some details about one of these crises, which I would not have believed were my source of information not as sure as it is. Hitler was standing there in his bedroom, stumbling about, looking around him with a distraught look. He was muttering: "It's him! It's him! He's here!" His lips had turned blue. He was dripping with sweat. Suddenly, he uttered some numbers which made no sense, then some words, then bits of sentences. It was frightening. He used terms which were strung together in the strangest way and which were absolutely weird. Then, he again became silent, although his lips continued to move. He was given a massage and something to drink. Then, all of a sudden, he screamed: "There! Over there! In the corner! Who is it?" He was jumping up and down, and he was howling. They reassured him that everything was all right, and he gradually calmed down.<sup>5</sup> (*Hitler Told Me*)

It is certain, even if we have some reservations concerning the preceding testimony, that Hitler as a person had something most disconcerting about him. Goebbels, his minister of propaganda who was among those closest to him, confided one day to his aide-de-camp, Prince Schaumburg-Lippe:

I have been working with him for years, I see him almost every day, and still there are times when he loses me completely. Who can claim to know him as he really is? In the world of absolute fatality in which he moves, nothing makes sense; neither good, evil, time, space, nor what men call success, can be used as criteria. You'll think I'm crazy, but listen to me: Hitler will bring us to a catastrophe. But his ideas, once they have been transformed, will acquire a new strength. Hitler has enemies in the world who sense what he is really like. But I doubt that he has

a single friend who knows him, outside of myself. And in spite of that, what he is in the final analysis, I don't know. Is he really human? I would not want to swear on it. There are times when he gives me the chills.

Hitler's words, "I am following the way shown me by Providence, with the confidence of a sleepwalker," point to the hypothesis of supernormal powers. But where would Hitler have gotten these powers? From the Thule Society which had initiated him into the esotericism of the East? From the mysterious monk with green gloves sent by the sages of Tibet? Or possibly from some earlier revelation? We should not dismiss Hitler's childhood, bathed in romanticism, nor the famous Lambach Abbey where he was a pupil when he was ten. It was during this time that destiny already revealed to him the emblem which would be his fortune and his undoing: the swastika.

The old prior of the Abbey of Lambach-am-Traun (Upper Austria) still remembered in 1930 Hitler as a young boy:

You could not help but notice Hitler. This son of a retired customs official was, as far as the townspeople were concerned, a bad boy who would not turn out very well. It is true that he was thin-skinned and undisciplined; he liked to play hooky and run through the forest. He read many of the popular novels of the Far West by Karl May. But Hitler was very gifted. We remember him as an unusually headstrong and troubled child, who submitted with delight to the enchantment of the Holy Offices, losing himself in the poetry of our quiet arcades, our echoing courts, and the tombs. He had caught our attention, although he was only ten years old, through his leadership qualities and the authority of his bearing. It was he who led his classmates through the cloister and who showed them their places on the classroom benches. He was the one who set the tone.

Of Lambach Abbey Hitler retained an early mystical experience, which later developed into neo-Gnostic tendencies with a Cathar flavor, especially the swastika engraved some



thirty years earlier everywhere in the monastery by the abbot Theodorich Hagen. A most erudite ecclesiastic, Father Hagen had a fair knowledge of astrology. He was also a specialist on the Apocalypse of Saint John, known to have been a fundamental part of the Cathar religion, and on Joachim de Flora, the famous visionary author and prophet of the third empire and of the Holy Spirit, who had been accused by the theologians of being sympathetic to the Albigensian heresy.

In 1856, Father Hagen made a long trip to the Near East stopping, among other places, at Jerusalem and then at the Island of Patmos where Saint John had his heavenly visions. He also visited Persia, Arabia, Turkey, and the Caucasus, doubtless studying while there Islamic Sufism, in seeking the transcendent unity of the different religions.

Upon his return to Lambach in 1868, this strange Benedictine immediately set out to find workers and cabinet-makers, whom he ordered to sculpt on the four corners of the abbey (on the stone, the wood, and even the religious objects) a sign unknown to any of them: the swastika, or gamma cross. This case is without parallel in the annals of the Church. The question is, was Father Hagen still a member of the Catholic Church when he put everywhere the prophetic sign venerated in the Occident by the Cathars and Templar neo-Gnostics?

There is something else which lends further weight to these startling facts. While young Adolf Hitler was still a pupil at the abbey, a Cistercian monk answering to the name of Adolf Joseph Lanz, physically the model of the blond, blue-eyed Aryan, made a stay at Lambach. Drawn by the austerity of the monastic life, he stayed for several weeks, shut up in the monastery library, pursuing some mysterious research. Did he find what he was looking for? The fact of the matter is that, discarding his frock, he left for Vienna where the following year (1900) he founded the Order of the New Temple, inspired, as its name suggests,

by the Templars, with Lanz setting himself up as Grand Master. Lanz was himself initiated, so he said, by a successor of Jacques de Molay. According to Wilfried Daim, Hitler regularly read *Ostara*, the periodical published since 1905 by Georg Lanz von Liebenfels, *alias* Adolf Joseph Lanz, which, let us note, also used the swastika as a rallying sign. For Lanz, the inferior races with their dark hair were the apes of Sodom spoken of in the Bible, the demons, in contrast to the blond, blue-eyed Aryans, masterpiece of the gods, who were endowed with "powerhouses" and with "electric organs" that ensured their absolute supremacy over all other beings. Lanz wanted to stir the gods lying dormant in man, to endow him once more with the divine strength which would restore to him his original power.

Lanz claimed to have thus formed several great statesmen, notably Adolf Hitler and Lord Kitchener. Hitler, "tapped" while still a child, was able to benefit (much like the dalai-lamas of Tibet) from a similar initiation, completed by subsequent acquisitions, which would explain his hatred for the Roman Catholic Church, against whose "intolerance" he lashed out, and his constant invocations to a religion which he claimed was a personal one, but which was in reality only a late resurgence of Templar Catharism. Joseph Greiner, who knew Hitler in Vienna and Munich, points out that Germanic mythology was among his favorite readings. According to the same witness:

[Hitler] remembered, much better than could many a professor, the substance of the 25,000 verses of *Parzival*. Martin Luther and the whole history of the Reformation were also among his preferred readings, and he was keenly interested in the Dominican Savonarola. He was well-informed on what Zwingli had done in Zurich and Calvin in Geneva, and he *had read the teachings of Confucius, Buddha, and their contemporaries*. He did an enormous amount of reading on *Moses, Jesus, and the origins of Christianity*, and in this connection, he even studied the works of Renan and Rosaltis. In the classics he read Shakespeare,



Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Wieland, Ruckert, and Dante, and among the modern authors, Scheffel, Stifter, Hammerling, Heibel, Rosegger, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Ibsen, and Zola.

We notice, in discovering the favorite authors of Hitler, that his preferences were dictated by very special considerations. The study of Oriental and Tibetan wisdom, the birth of Christianity which saw the flowering of the Gnostic authors, and the anti-Catholic Reformation are completed by the reading of particular authors whose works are strongly marked with esotericism: Dante, Goethe, and nearer to our own time, Hauptmann, whom we shall come back to later. These tendencies to cultivate the unusual became increasingly evident, and the private life of Adolf Hitler shows us a man fallen prey to a dizzying religious mystique, which was very often interpreted wrongly.

It is a well-known fact that Hitler was a vegetarian. But who has really tried to fathom the real reason behind this asceticism? It has occurred to no one that Hitler's vegetarianism went along perfectly with the Cathar doctrine.

For the benefit of a few of his close friends, Hitler would explain why he kept to this diet, but he never explained the deeper reasons behind this self-disciplining. To Otto Dietrich and Hermann Rauschning, he confided that if he abstained from meat and from cigarettes it was not only for reasons of hygiene, but as a matter of "reasoned conviction" and to bring about a "general purification" of his entire being. During meals, in order to disgust his meat-eating guests, Hitler could not refrain from describing, in lurid detail, what butchers do in the slaughterhouses. He was utterly revolted by this carnage, for this man who calmly sent people to their death wept when his canaries died.<sup>6</sup> He could not find harsh enough words for hunters, whom he detested. In point of fact, Hitler believed in the reincarnation of souls in animal bodies, in the manner of the Buddhists and the Cathars, who believed in metempsychosis. This explains his affection for animals and especially for

dogs, man's closest friend. "I'm an animal lover," Hitler said, "and I love dogs most of all."

Another trait was his seeming affection for children. The photos showing Hitler hugging little boys or girls bringing him gifts or flowers are probably not just propaganda. That is what Hitler did in his private life. The five Goebbels children often came to the Chancellery or to the Berghof to see the man they affectionately referred to as "Uncle Adolf." For his part Hitler, who could be easily irritated, had great patience whenever he was with them, giving them goodies or telling them funny stories. Since he himself had no children, he took the title "father of all German children."

Hitler's intimate life remains a mystery. In spite of everything which has been said on the subject, we believe that he practiced continence, not because of impotence, but as a firm conviction in a spirit of discipline and purification. The way Hitler saw things, to give up continence would bring about the loss of those supranatural powers bestowed as a special gift on the man of politics. That is why Hitler's relationship with women was solely of the platonic kind. But that did not keep him from enjoying the company of attractive women. One of his secretaries tells us:

Hitler loved women who wore real flowers. Sometimes he would take flowers which had been used to decorate the table and throw them, in a prepossessing way, to his lady guests. When those to whom he had thus shown his interest had put them in their hair or on their dress, Hitler would always pay them a compliment. When a woman came to the table wearing flowers whose color he didn't like, he would quickly choose from among those in a vase and offer them, saying that they would go better with the whiteness of her complexion or with the color of her dress.<sup>7</sup>

We find few women in Hitler's life, although it is said that he had many romances as a younger man. Three women stand out: Stephani, Geli Raubal, and finally, Eva Braun.

Hitler was sixteen when he fell in love for the first time



with a girl named Stefani. "Every evening," Leon Degrelle tells us, "he would wait on the bridge at Linz to see her come by." For six months this stratagem went on, without his daring to say a word to her. At this age Hitler was very timid and the adolescent ate his heart out for ten years, which seems almost unbelievable, in this love from a distance, in the manner of the poets of the end of the Middle Ages, Dante and Petrarch, whom he admired profoundly. "In Hitler's entire youth," states Degrelle, "there was only one love, whether we like it or not."<sup>8</sup>

In the course of his life as political tribune, Hitler had several romances, but all ended tragically. An early affair ended when a young woman committed suicide in a hotel room. Geli Raubal, his own niece, whom he loved to distraction, killed herself with a revolver. Hitler's morbid love had driven her out of her mind.

The Führer's last love affair was with Eva Braun, whom his photographer Hoffmann had introduced to him and whom he married "in extremis," before taking the young woman with him into death on April 29, 1945. As far back as 1935, Eva had tried to take her life with a little revolver which she carried in her handbag.

In this wave of suicides, we must also include the name of the Englishwoman, Unity Mitford. "She was," says someone who saw her, "like a Greek goddess, tall and slender, the perfect Germanic type." She thought that, through her love, she would be able to reconcile Hitler and England. Unity followed Hitler everywhere he went, and occasionally he invited her to come with him. Her beauty drew Hitler's admiration, but things never went further than that. After war was declared on September 3, 1939, Unity, in utter despair, shot herself in the head, under the windows of the Chancellery. Gravely wounded, she was committed to the care of Germany's greatest surgeons. Every day, Hitler had roses brought to her. A special train was dispatched to take her to Switzerland. From there, she was able to return to

England, where she died some time after the death of her idol. Hitler's love life was extraordinary. It ended in the flames of a new Cathar pyre, on April 30, 1945.

Such phenomena can only be understood in the light of a particular outlook on life and on things in general. Hitler had taken an oath of chastity, like the Pures, those called Albigensians.<sup>9</sup> In his eyes, the purity of the body was as indispensable as the purity of the spirit, the third level in the spiritual order, if one wanted to communicate with the otherworldly entities who inspired in him the great themes of his mission: For Hitler believed in a higher power likened to God, and he constantly reaffirmed this in his speeches where he invokes the Almighty (and even in his private conversations). What was his conception of the Supreme Being? Was it in the way attributed to him by Alphonse de Chateaubriant, in *The Harvest of Strength* (*La Gerbe des forces*)? "Hitler, like Jeremiah, went down into the potter's house; and it was in the potter's house that God made him hear His word . . . so that everything today in Germany, this whole extraordinary German renaissance, comes from the house of the potter." We might note that the allusion to the potter of the Bible can have an additional meaning: It is a well-known fact that the Cathars often were artisans and particularly potters, a trade which, with weaving, they held in high esteem.

Other allusions to Catharism can be found. For example, in Hermann Rauschnig's *Hitler Told Me* we learn that Hitler lavishly received Gerhart Hauptmann, the renowned author of *The Weavers*, a play whose action takes place in the nineteenth century, but which contains a great number of symbols relative to the medieval weavers, notably the Cathars:

Gerhart Hauptmann was introduced. The Führer shook his hand and looked him in the eyes. It was the famous look everyone talked about, this look which gives you shudders and concerning which an eminent, middle-aged jurist told me one day that,



having experienced it, he had only one wish: to go back home to collect himself and to assimilate this unique experience. Hitler shook once more Hauptmann's hand. It is now, everyone thought who was there, that we will hear the immortal words which will become part of history. It is now, Hauptmann himself thought. And the Führer, for the third time, shook hands with the great poet. Then he went over to greet the other guests. Sometime later, Hauptmann confided to his friends that this meeting had been the greatest moment and the recompense of his entire life.

Hitler shook Hauptmann's hands *three times*. Now, the figure three is a sign of recognition among the initiate of certain orders, notably the Masons—and the Cathars. By this gesture, Hitler acknowledged Hauptmann as a initiate, and transmitted to him his "fluid," which throws a whole new light on the interpretation, otherwise absurd, given by Hauptmann himself of this encounter. If we examine Hitler's own thinking, which is to some extent revealed through his words, we will see that the relationship which we have proposed is by no means far-fetched.

#### THE CONCORDANCES

All the old Gnostic, dualist, and Cathar belief was hidden in National Socialism, as is the case with every society of an ambiguous character, open toward the outside, but closed toward the inside. For those looking only at the exterior, Hitlerism could pass for an exaggerated outcropping of the old Pan-Germanism and not for something else. However, there were some who glimpsed the truth, for example, the renowned astrologer Kerneiz, a specialist in Tibetan Buddhism who, casting Hitler's horoscope, noticed in his natal theme the moon's position at 6°37' from Capricorn, a position corresponding in the Hindu zodiac to the constellation Sravana. This has a very special meaning: Its influence makes leaders of philosophical and political schools, *founders of religious sects*.

Afraid of being found out, Hitler openly scorned astrol-

ogy because it revealed the basis of his secret cosmogony. Still, this did not stop him from secretly calling on astrologers before making an important decision.

It was doubtless his desire to draw nearer to the stars, which impelled the chancellor to build, at the summit of Mount Kehlstein in the Bavarian Alps, his famous "Eagle's Nest" where he withdrew to meditate on his wild plans, receiving there only distinguished guests, in order to impress them. In this romantic setting,

one naturally hearkens back to King Ludwig II of Bavaria, to this legendary monarch with his Wagnerian palaces, living in his solitude and madness. Concealed in a rocky gorge, hidden from the eyes of the curious, an elevator climbs several hundred meters. It opens in a crystal house, invisible in the middle of huge rocks, looking toward the imposing Mount Watzmann. It is there that, soaring above the world, inaccessible, the German Führer reigns. This is his eyrie. It is there that he challenges Eternity, that he throws his gauntlet in the face of the centuries.<sup>11</sup>

In taking refuge on the heights where only the royal eagle soars, Hitler followed the example of Zoroaster, the prophet of the Aryans, and the Albigensians who turned Montségur into a temple-fortress consecrated to sun worship. Berchtesgaden was a "sacred" site after the fashion of Venusberg and the Pyrenean Tabor. These magic thoughts must have haunted the master of Greater Germany as he contemplated through the large bay windows of the Kehlsteinhaus the grandiose sight of the Alpine summits whose snowy crests stood out sharply against the horizon.

From time to time, Hitler left his dream world to expound before his dinner guests on the themes of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*: admiration for the world of antiquity, scorn for Christianity such as it is taught, hatred for the Catholic church, with sometimes brutal revelations of an unconfessed sympathy for all heretics and seekers of gods.

In the great hall of the Berghof, before the high fireplace



where flamed whole tree-trunks, Hitler spent long moments of silence, fascinated by the flames, questioning the glowing embers. Suddenly, he came out of his reflection and, before his petrified guests, launched into long monologues in which he attempted to explain his own conceptions of the world. As far as he was concerned all evil had begun with the appearance of Christianity, that destroyer of the ancient priesthood and of initiatory science. "Christ was an Aryan, and Saint Paul had used his doctrine to mobilize the mob and to thus organize a pre-Bolshevism. This intrusion into the world marks the end of a long reign, that of the sublime, Greco-Latin genius."

Of his admiration for Greece, Hitler made no mystery:

If we consider the ancient Greeks (who were Germans), we find they had a beauty much superior to the beauty one finds today—I mean that as much for the realm of thought as for that of forms. If we plunge further into the past, we find among the Egyptians humans of the quality of the Greeks. Since the birth of Christ, there are barely forty generations that have lived on earth, and our knowledge goes back to barely a few thousand years before the Christian era. (*Libres propos*)

These last words throw some faint light on the ideas which fermented in Hitler's mind. The guardians of sacred science who had come from the Atlantan tradition, the high priests of Egypt, loomed as among the Gnostics and neo-Platonic philosophers of Alexandria, as masters of integral knowledge, the secret aspiration of Nazism which wanted thus to exploit in its last open manifestation, Catharism, the treasures of a certain lost knowledge. Consequently, Hitler continued:

The priests of antiquity were closer to nature, and they modestly sought after the meaning of things. On the other side Christianity promulgates its inconsistent dogmas and imposes them by force. *Such a religion carries within it intolerance and persecution. There is none more covered with blood.*

This denunciation of the excesses committed by the Church are surprising coming from the mouth of a man who had millions of human beings put to death, but it finds its logic in the fanatical line followed by the master of the Third Reich. Those who had once put the torch to the pyres were themselves to become the persecuted.<sup>12</sup> This conception of things, lumping together Jews and Christians in one single execration by inverting historical fact, brought with it the bloody executions of the Nazi reign and furnished human grist for the sinister mills of Auschwitz. Dante's *Inferno* was indeed reconstituted, but on Earth, and Hitler could indeed show his admiration for the author of the *Divine Comedy*, a work which hallows the union of Templar Catharism: "It is remarkable how many similarities there are between the evolution of Germany and that of Italy. The creators of the language, Dante and Luther, rose up against the papacy's wishes for ecumenism" (*Libres propos*). The author of *Mein Kampf* was indeed anti-Christian to the extent that the church and Christianity had for a long time been identical, the ecclesiastical hierarchy giving to doctrine its final shape. However, the person of Christ was in his eyes not to be scorned; on the contrary, since the chancellor proclaimed to his friends that "*Jesus fought against the corrupting materialism of his time, and therefore against the Jews.*"

All of his hate, therefore, is directed against the Children of Israel and against the greatest among them, Saint Paul, who founded the first Christian communities of Europe:

Paul of Tarsus, who was at first one of the most relentless adversaries of the Christians, suddenly got the idea of the possibility of utilizing intelligently and for other ends, an idea which exercised such a power of fascination. . . . *It was then that the future Saint Paul denatured, with diabolical refinement, the whole idea of Christianity.*<sup>13</sup>

We find here the Gnostic theme of the adulterated doctrine



and even the hatred for Paul is one of the constants of the Manichaeism religion, the distant ancestor of the Cathars. "Of this idea which contained a declaration of war on the Golden Calf, on the selfishness and materialism of the Jews, he made the rallying cry of all kinds of slaves against the elite, against the masters, against the rulers."<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, the medium from Braunau, who could not find words offensive enough to denounce "the imposture of the Old Testament," had nothing but praise for the traditional Oriental philosophies, full of esotericism, which gave birth to Gnosticism and later, to the Albigensian faith. Hitler confided to his familiars:

You sometimes get a violent feeling of anger at the idea that some Germans were able to be taken in by theological doctrines devoid of any depth, while there are others on this vast earth, such as *those of Confucius, of Buddha, and of Mohammed, which offer for religious anxiety, sustenance of a much different value.*

All efforts to substitute for the tutelage of the church a real religious liberty having failed following persecutions, hate for the Catholic clergy remains a constant in Hitler's talks: "The church has bent itself to the need for imposing its moral code with unrivaled brutality. *It has not even shrunk from the threat of the stake, delivering up to the flames by thousands, men of great worth.*"

This allusion to the tragedy of the Albigensians will not surprise us after what we already know. However, the subject remained taboo, and Hitler could not disclose the most significant part of his thought without revealing the secrets of the sect. Why, if he did not believe in these ideas, would he have kept a talisman in his office at the chancellery, the lance which, it was said, had pierced the side of Christ?<sup>15</sup> We know that, with the Grail, this emblem was one of the two signs of Cathar esotericism.

What has confused his biographers is the dual nature of the personage: One, cold, almost positivistic, reasons like

a free-thinker; the other, mysterious, a philosopher,<sup>16</sup> develops a delirious mystique which contradicts his earlier statements. One acts in no other way, when one wants to cover his tracks. A great number of historians have been wrong. That is why an attempt at a metaphysical synthesis of Nazism is in order. In the light of this comparison, we will see what profound affinity linked Hitlerian National Socialism and a certain conception of Cathar neo-Manichaeism.

The whole Christ is not appeared on earth  
His human and divine image must yet be completed.  
One day, the salvation of the world, the Redemption will reach  
completion  
When God and Man will become filled, alive, in the Spirit.  
Though the image of Jesus, reflection of our senses,  
Were to dim and fade in the continuing flux of time;  
Though all that give witness to Jesus were to disappear,  
The God-Man is the center, the luminous heart of all the worlds.  
Lenau, *The Albigensians (Les Albigeois)*<sup>17</sup>

#### THE METAPHYSICAL AFFINITIES

The above poem of Cathar inspiration could be signed by a Gnostic—or a Nazi intellectual. We find there once again the two themes, that of a ghostlike Christ and a type of pantheism, which makes man the divine revealer in a resurgence of the racist myth.

What is striking among the elite of National Socialism is this Gnostic horror of matter, source of corruption, which seems to contradict racism elevated to the dignity of a principle. Alphonse de Chateaubriant, who was deeply religious, witnessed this phenomenon. A brilliant intellectual, the author of *The Harvest of Strength (La Gerbe des forces)*, he let himself be taken in by the cathedrals of light, the ostentatious displays at Nuremberg—the Nazi Rome—and the romanticism of a new Germany which appeared to him to be



the citadel of a renewed spirituality. Quoting the youth groups of the Party and of the SS he writes:

We utterly reject thinking and acting as though God having created the universe and put man into it, we can only stand by helplessly and wait.

We refuse to cross our arms under the determinism of the so-called laws of matter. What we want is inside, is something built inside. . . . How we want it! . . . We will not allow anyone to keep us from building before God and before men what must be built!

It is against the debasement of materialized man that, after Hitler, the German man has risen up, and it is to tear men everywhere from this debasement that thousands of young men come to study and to prepare themselves in the Germanic Ordensburgen. If we understand better the order of the great movements which have succeeded one another since the invasion of Semitic Rome by the barbarians; the coronation of Charlemagne and the building of Rheims Cathedral; and finally the French Revolution—we will understand better the profound meaning, the historical meaning, of these royal marguerites which decorate each place-setting of the young believers in the new world, young candidates to be regenerated, in the great commons of Vogelsang.

Chateaubriant felt that the speakers were referring to a continuing tradition transmitted by groups or orders considered to be the ancestors of the Nazis:

He spoke as though I might have been a Templar from France, one of those last Templars of France, a sort of last survivor of the massacres and of the burnings of the city, who had come to listen to and write down the grave thoughts of some gruff knight of the Teutonic Order.

The reference to the Templars is classic, since the monk-knights took up the torch of the Gnostic tradition of the Albigensians after the latter had disappeared. In this connection we related at the beginning of this book the adventure of the Nazi intellectual Otto Rahn, who was seeking the Grail in the Pyrenees. In this quest racism indeed ap-

pears as a myth supporting the idealized cult of pure blood raised to the level of mystery. Rahn also takes his inspiration from the Order of the Temple and asserts such a kinship which he wanted to impose in the innermost circles of the SS and the party.

In *The Treasure of the Albigensians* (*Le Trésor des Albigeois*) by Maurice Magre, which appeared in 1938 during the height of the Hitlerian effervescence, we find a glorification of the sign chosen by Hitler, the swastika, which he describes in a paraphrase, doubtless for fear of frightening the reader:

"And what is the meaning," I asked again, "of that stone over there, which is cut like the signposts which you see at road crossings?" I pointed out a stone which had on one of its sides two lines broken in three parts and forming a sort of wheel. It seemed like the one which had intrigued me in the Forest of Cabrioules.

"It does indeed show which road to take, but it is a road which goes in no known direction. This sign was in times past inscribed almost everywhere by men who came from the East. But the meaning of this language has been lost. The Holy Grail is a living word of the same language."<sup>18</sup>

And what should we think of this sentence in the same work, which seems to announce Hitler in filigree: "You will perhaps notice a new Grail raised by a mad knight in the mountains ever more distant."<sup>19</sup>

However, after the fall of Montségur, the Cathar troubadours sang this verse of prophetic augury: *Au bout de sept cents ans reverdit le laurier* (*At the end of seven hundred years, the laurel will be green again*). They never guessed that one day, seven centuries later, a political sect would invoke their name under the seal of secrecy in order to adorn itself with a spiritual halo. That is why Hitler asserted in 1944 (the seven hundredth anniversary of the burning of the heretics at Montségur) that mankind experienced a renewing of the spirit every 700 years.

What about these words? There is no doubt about it, in



the Gnostic and neo-Cathar climate in which the Nazi pontiffs from Rosenberg to Himmler took such delight, people were convinced that they were seeing the fulfillment of the troubadour prophecies of the thirteenth century.

With Manichaeism as the governing principle, the worst excesses were committed by the Nazis without the least remorse, morality having been stripped of all its meaning. The Nazis forgot, however, what is written in the Gospel of St. John: "He who lives by the sword, shall perish by the sword."

The massacre of the Jews has crowned Israel forever with the halo of martyrdom and Judeo-Christian thought was not by any means annihilated in this holocaust, quite the contrary. Having pushed dualist reasoning to monstrous consequences, National Socialism sank into the chaos which it had promised its enemies. The user of violence in its turn has perished.

## 12

# Apocalypse: The Twilight of the Gods

### APOCALYPSE AND JOHANNITE TRADITION

AS WE HAVE SEEN, prophetism in the Johannite tradition has from all time had fervent adepts, well before our modern interpreter. From the medieval period to the children of Fatima,<sup>1</sup> by way of the *Centuries* of Nostradamus, there have always been men to announce, whether through biblical interpretation or by reading astrological charts, the end of time preceded by "the reign of a great monarch," the German "millenarium" or the famous "golden age" returned with the Paraclete, a period itself following unheard-of catastrophes which will see mankind suffer evil upon evil.

The Germans, more than any other people, have been sensitive to such prophecies, and National Socialism was no exception. Alphonse de Chateaubriant was accurate in saying that "the German seeks to atune himself to the cosmos" and that thus, without suspecting it, he "understands and lives the Apocalypse."<sup>2</sup>

Was Hitler thinking about the Apocalypse when he conjured up the Thousand Year Reich? Was he thinking about Charlemagne, Frederick Barbarossa, the Order of the Temple, and the Albigensians? Hitler has rightly been con-



demned for his homicidal madness, but we would be well advised not to forget the words of Christ to Peter: "What you will bind on Earth, will be bound in Heaven, and what you will loose on Earth, will be loosed in Heaven." Did the Führer of Greater Germany who often ended his speeches with the word "Amen," not believe that he held the power of the keys, this mysterious and terrible gift which opens the gates of Hell as well as those of Paradise?

#### NEO-ALBIGENSIANISM OR COUNTERFEIT?

Whether the prophecies told the truth or not, Hitler and National Socialism are indissolubly tied to the appearance of the new Gnosis of which they are the monstrous offspring.

Catharism, this pure faith of the Albigensians, was seen by the Nazis through the distorting prism of racist myth; it nonetheless remains true that the themes of Romany, the Grail, and the most occult aspects of the Albigensian heresy fuse within Hitlerism in an alchemistic crucible where blend the myth of blood, the old Nordic legends, and the esoteric tradition of the East.

Hitler came forth at the right time, at the hour prophesied, like a boil ripened in a slow incubation through the accouchement of that "Magna Mater" that was Germany.

All of the subterranean currents of Germanic thought, all the philosophico-religious tendencies at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, converge with a frightening symmetry in the appearance of the new Messiah who will save the Third Germany by hastening the era of the Holy Spirit or Paraclete so long awaited by Catharism and Rosicrucianism. Germanic illuminism had not backed down since that distant time which saw the pyres being lighted for the Templars, the last inheritors in France, after the massacre of the Albigensians, of the Gnostic tradition. The torch then passed to the Rosicrucian

brethren, guardians of the mystical rose, who spread throughout Germany, which henceforth was adorned with the title of "sacred" land.

It suffices to glance at German literature to be convinced of this: The Germans knew; Hölderlin, Hoffmann, and the genius Goethe, who resurrected the satanic Doctor Faust, drew from the source of all sources, because they had freed themselves from the tutelary grip of the church.

At the end of the nineteenth century, we see rising in a Germany whipped up by the renewal of imperial anti-papistry an entire generation of writers whose favorite themes will turn on the subjects of Gnosis and heresy, when they do not plunge, after the example of Wagner and Nietzsche, into the fantastic adventure of eternal magic and of man-god.

The greatest among these masters who wanted to teach disciples and found a school of philosophy is Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946). His works, *The Sunken Bell* (*Die Versunkene Glocke*, 1896 [T.N.]), *The Weavers* (*Die Weber*, 1892 [T.N.]), and *And Pippa Dances* (*Und Pippa tanzt*, 1906), relate the adventure of master craftsmen hiding behind their symbolic trade the mystique of the highest knowledge. Whether Hauptmann puts on stage the Venetian master glassblowers or the loves of Pippa and the blond Hellbrigel, symbolizing the union of the German soul and of Mediterranean genius, or the heros of Greek mythology, as in *Ulysses' Bow* (1914) and *Iphegenia at Delphi*, where the author has the young heroine perish while celebrating the delights of nothingness—it is always the same cult of a western Buddhism in open opposition to traditional Christianity. The fascination of Paganism inspires him to write in 1924 *The Island of the Great Mother* (*Der Insel der grosser Mutter*).

Some years earlier in *The Heretic of Soana*, his best novel, he gave to a similar thought a less strange form. As for his first great novel *The Fool in Christ: Emmanuel Quint* (*Der*



*Narr in Christo: Emmanuel Quint*, 1910), he relates the life of a Silesian cabinetmaker who is a luminary and wants to realize the imitation of Jesus Christ.

Toward the end of his life, which coincides with the rise and triumph of Nazism, Hauptmann founders in a symbolic delirium where mysticism vies with magic. *Till Eulenspiegel* and *The Great Dream* are the most striking examples, constituting veritable "cosmic" poems. In the tercets of *The Great Dream*, the author takes as his model the *Divine Comedy* of Dante (in his view, another heretic) and describes allegorically the horrors of war, ending up at a new Gnosis; guided by the angel Satanael, the poet crosses the allegorical worlds; he sees the misdeeds of the Catholic church and finally, on the summit of Parnassus, is present at the uniting of misunderstood Christianity and the genius of ancient Greece.

Next to Hauptmann and as though seconding him, although in a much different register, is Stefan George (1868-1933), the greatest contemporary German poet, to whom Hitler offered the presidency of the German Academy in 1933. That gives us some idea of his enthusiasm for the author of *Maximin*.

A fervent partisan of Greater Lotharingia who idolized the German adolescent, George breathed a new life into the Pagan myths of Greece; borrowing from ancient, medieval, and oriental myths, his collections of verse denounce "the lie of the individual and of the world," that is to say, the domination of matter, a Cathar theory par excellence. At the end of the collection *Year of the Soul*, the water-sprites invite the souls of the weary to take their rest and to pass into oblivion.

In *Der Siebente Ring* (*The Seventh Ring*, 1907), George rejects violently the modern world and prays for the coming of the cataclysm which will destroy the perverse creation. The work consists of seven books, arranged in symbolic circles around the central book, *Maximin*, the young idealized

hero whom George extols as the new god. Around this myth is developed a whole Gnosis which constitutes, henceforth, the poet's thinking. *The Star of the Alliance* (*Der Stern des Bundes*, 1914) contains the Tables of the Law of the new society, of which the "Cenacle" is to be the seed.

Around George and in the "Cenacle" which he had founded as a new Platonic Academy, writers gravitated moving about in an irrational climate permeated with Gnosticism and with Manichaeian recrudescences. Thus, for Ludwig Klages (1872-1956), a disciple of Nietzsche, man is the meeting point of cosmic forces and is called to regenerate a lethargic world. Like many symbolists, George had a taste for initiatory doctrines. In this dying world, which marks the end of a century and of an epoch, arms reach out toward the Saviour announced by Nietzsche, the Redeemer, the new Christ who will renew the world. Adolf Hitler will come—they had been waiting for him for so long.<sup>3</sup>

With the triumph of Nazism, this literature, far from disappearing, will know a renewed popularity. Rudolf Binding, in an open letter to Romain Rolland,<sup>4</sup> celebrated in the coming of National Socialism "an authentically religious revolution."

Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, born in Budapest in 1878, was one of the prides of National Socialist literature. This writer, who attributes the metaphysics of modern times to the tradition of the "factories" of the Masons, was to exercise a great influence in the ruling circles of Hitlerian Germany. At the beginning of his *Paracelsus*, Kolbenheyer compares Wotan, the god of might, with an exhausted Christ. At the end of the book, Wotan buries Christ in the ice of the eternal glaciers, doubtless in the intention that his message will come forth again one day in another form. He writes, in the same line of thinking, an anti-Catholic drama on Canossa, *Gregory and Henry* (1934), in which he praises the emperor's struggle against the papacy.

How could such thoughts and such a procession of more



or less delirious authors come forth during our times after twenty centuries of Christian influence?

The truth of the matter is that we only know one side of things. Behind the exotericism, there is an esotericism. Hitlerism chose to make use of the secret doctrine of the Cathars in order to glorify its own idol; however, the Nazi ideal has the appearance of a rapacious eagle rather than that of the pure Albigensian dove, and that must be seen as one of the reasons for its failure.

Rock crystal illuminated by the fires of the Sun resembles diamond, but it has neither its purity nor its brilliance. It was, however, this stone that National Socialism buried deep within the glaciers after the destruction of the Third Reich by fire to serve as a message, in future times, to the survivors of "Aryan" mankind.

#### THE NEW TABLETS OF THE LAW

Having given up the plan for establishing *Serail*<sup>5</sup> and making a last-ditch stand in the mountains surrounding Berchtesgaden, the Führer of the Third Germany decided to end his days in Berlin.

Hitler's pathological horror of water would not have allowed him to take refuge in whatever ocean redoubt the navy might have been able to construct. All the oft-heard conjectures, suggesting that Hitler managed to escape death or that the master of the Third Reich succeeded in escaping, are pure fantasy.

Yet who will say that even up to its end, the Nazi *Milenum* did not hold in store for the world an abundance of mysterious surprises? It would be foolish to deny and to pass over in silence certain facts which time and the Aryan legends have repeatedly called to our attention.

In the very last days of April, 1945, eyewitnesses noted the mysterious takeoff, in the region of Salzburg, of a four-engined aircraft (believed to be a Heinkel 277 V-1) whose

destination has remained unknown. According to the writer Saint-Loup, this same aircraft carried off the initiates of the Black Order to a prearranged refuge in South America. This hypothesis we cannot accept, nor that according to which the opposition between the All-Europe SS and the German SS led to a corresponding hierarchisation within the Black Order. There is no evidence indicating a dispute over ideology but rather, a recruiting crisis, and it therefore seems doubtful that either of the two groups was in a position to dispose of such an aircraft, which would have allowed its leaders to escape the justice of the victors.

Taking into careful account what we know of the last days of the Third Reich, we should like to offer a more realistic explanation of the events, since all attempts to discover an underwater redoubt in the region most often mentioned, the islands of the Strait of Magellan, have been unsuccessful. If an aircraft such as that mentioned did in fact succeed in taking off in the very last days of the war in 1945, it could only have been carrying initiates in the most precise sense of the term; that is, a small number of persons possessing a high degree of esoteric knowledge and even perhaps certain initiators who vanished in the last months of the war but whose presence in Hitler's Germany can no longer be disputed. All considered, where could this "elite" have gone, save to that region where everyone situates a large part of initiatory rite, both present and past—Asia. The range of the aircraft would have easily allowed this. It seems altogether likely that all the tracks lead if not to Katmandu, then certainly to the region of the Himalayas.<sup>6</sup>

As for the spiritual treasure, a second event of seemingly even greater importance suggests that its story does not end with the military defeat of its most recent possessors.

On May 2, 1945, an SS company moving under "special orders" and made up uniquely of officers blocked the Innsbruck-Salzburg road, in order to allow the passage of a convoy coming down from the Berghof (Hitler's "Eagle's



Nest") in the very midst of the Allied advance. The convoy exited at the juncture of the Isar River and its valley during the very night that marked the surrender of Berlin. Having picked up during its itinerary its flanking cover, the column made its way to the high mountain.

Upon arriving at the foot of the Zillertal mountain mass, a small group of select SS officers took possession of a heavy lead chest, following a short torchlit ceremony. The mysterious load now committed to their sole trust, they took the path leading to the Schleigeiss glacier at the foot of the 3,000-meter-high Hochfeiler. It is there, in a ledge of snow at the edge of the precipice, that the object was buried: the Grail of Montségur, in all likelihood.

But its adventure was not to stop there! Shortly after these curious events, rumors started to fly in the region, attracting numerous people seeking less spiritual treasures. All of these seekers were to meet a hardly enviable fate. Most of them were found horribly mutilated, as were for example the Austrian lieutenant Franz Gottlieb, the would-be "Alpine climbers" Helmuth Mayr and Ludwig Pichler, or even decapitated, as was Emmanuel Werba in 1952.

Does the mysterious chest, buried in the snow of the eternal glaciers and containing the stone tablets with their tangled Pagan inscriptions, hold the eternal laws of the Aryans, analogous to the Ten Commandments of Moses?

These new Tables of the Law, intended to serve as a guide for the survivors of the cataclysms that the atomic civilization holds in store, may well be given up by the frontal moraine of the glacier, expected to occur about 1990-1995.

In anticipation of this event, a watchful guard made up of the faithful of the Black Order maintain their vigil all about the mountain, to receive the "Supreme Revelation."

## NOTES

### TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

1. In A.D. 412, Gaul was invaded by the Visigoths, or western Goths, a Germanic people. In A.D. 418, the emperor Honorius ceded to their king, Wallia, the vast southern region known as Aquitaine, with Toulouse its capital.
2. His book *Kreuzzug gegen den Gral* (*Crusade Against the Grail*, 1933), translated into French (*Croisade contre le Graal*, Paris: Stock, 1934), relates his adventure.
3. The tenacious survival of Paganism in Western civilization has been thoroughly studied by Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods. The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, New York: Harper, 1961.
4. A list of the known folklore and culture societies (many of which are fronts for the secret societies) is given in Kurt P. Tauber's impressively documented *Beyond Eagle and Swastika: German Nationalism Since 1945*, 2 vols. (Wesleyan University Press, 1967), II, Appendix A.
5. Robert G. L. Waite, in Afterword to Walter G. Langer's *The Mind of Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1972).
6. The self-styled high priest of the International Church of Satan, Anton S. LaVey, advocates an essentially fascist state in which the weak would be weeded out (*Newsweek*, August 16, 1971, p. 56); during his trial, Manson and two of his followers appeared in court attired as Nazi storm troopers (*Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, June 22, 1971, p. A-2). See Donald Nugent, "Satan is a Fascist," *The Month* (April, 1972), pp. 116-119.
7. See Brad Steiger and Warren Smith's *Satan's Assassins* (New York: Lancer, 1971), which offers a new theory suggesting that history's most notorious slayers have been controlled by the occult. Scholars have long known this to have been true of the hashish-eating Islamic sect of the Assassins, whose fanatics spread terror through the entire Middle East at the time of the Crusades. See Stephen Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper, 1964-1967), II, III, Index, s.v. "Assassins."
8. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, Bollingen Series LXXI (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969).

### INTRODUCTION

1. While it is true that since the 1950s the U.S. National Archives and Records Services, Washington, D.C., has been publishing its *Guides to German Records*, the most revealing documents on



- Nazism—those dealing with the Nazi Occult Bureau (Ahnenerbe)—are not available to the historian [T.N.].
2. A commune of 200 inhabitants, situated lower down.
  3. *Montségur, temple et forteresse des cathares d'Occitanie*, pp. 11–12.

#### CHAPTER 1. THE GRAIL: CHRISTIAN RELIC, PAGAN RELIC

1. Paris: Gallimard, 1960. Trans. Rollo Myers; New York: Avon, 1968.
2. "Lamb": the authors mean the Cathar heretics persecuted by the Inquisition, many of whom had fled to Germany and the Low Countries. "Other heretics": the millions of innocent Jews put to death in the gas ovens by the "Judaean-Christian heresy, Nazism." See Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz. Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), chap. I: "Religion and the Origins of the Death Camps. A Psychoanalytic Interpretation," pp. 16–35.
3. NSDAP equals National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei equals National Socialist German Workers' Party (abbreviated "Nazi" Party).
4. Deutsche Arbeiterpartei equals German Workers' Party, founded by Drexler; it became the Nazi Party.
5. Montségur's granite cone situates the château at an altitude of 4,100 feet. A precipice varying from 1,625 to 2,600 feet surrounds the citadel, of which only one side can be scaled. But this was not always the case. The rock was said to be pierced by hundreds of deep cells, somewhat like a beehive, and it is thought that a stairway of some 3,000 steps led to a hidden exit on the edge of the Hars River. The château, with its exposed groin ribs, formed a quadrilateral measuring 330 feet by 60 feet. The height of the battlements is 30 feet; the thickness of the walls, 6 feet. At the extreme northwest corner, like a sentinel watching the horizon, stands the square, massive dungeon.
6. It appeared in French the following year under the title: *La croisade contre le grail* (Paris: Stock, 1934 [T.N.]).
7. Strangely enough, Franconia was to become the first fiefdom of Nazism.
8. Manes, Mani, or Manichaeus (A.D. 216<sup>p</sup>–276<sup>p</sup>), founder of the dualist religion, exercised a great influence on Cathar doctrine. Friedrich Heer (*The Medieval World, Europe 1100–1350*, trans. Janet Sondheimer [New York: Mentor, 1963], p. 206) traces the penetration of Catharism into the Rhineland to the time of the Second Crusade, in 1149 [T.N.].
9. Paris: Julliard, 1966.
10. Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1969, p. 376.

11. The authors of the present study believe that the suicide took place some time in March, 1939 [T.N.].
12. How Hitler attempted to invert for his satanic purposes the occult powers of the relic known as the Holy Lance is the subject of Trevor Ravenscroft's *The Spear of Destiny. The Occult Power behind the Spear which pierced the side of Christ* (New York: Putnam's, 1973). He seems to be unaware of earlier research on the Lance and the Grail done by Rahn, Alleau, and the Angeberts [T.N.].
13. This may explain the confused explanation of the Church which took literally the term "precious stone" with the meaning "gem," making it, in its own symbolism, into the emerald fallen from Lucifer's forehead during his fall, after he had been banished from the heavenly realm by God. From this emerald was cut the Grail, with its 144 facets, to become the sacred cup containing the Precious Blood of Christ.
14. By *Gnosis*, we mean: "the search for Absolute Knowledge of the world by means of intelligence and wisdom."
15. *Adolf Hitler* (Paris: 1936).
16. At this time, of course, the greatest specialists on the French *Midi* (Provence, Languedoc, Aquitaine) were Germans. With some few exceptions, most French academicians thought themselves "above" such questions of a purely "regional" nature, of intense interest to the Germans. The trend seems fortunately to have changed in the course of the last few years, thanks to the perseverance of a number of dedicated scholars from the Midi: Messrs. Nelli, Niel, D. Roché, whose research finally caught the attention of the University.
17. The name given to the Cathars of Languedoc is Albigensians.
18. An ascetic, celibate Jewish cult of ancient Palestine (second century B.C.) [T.N.].
19. In his book *Crusade Against the Grail*, Otto Rahn expresses the following opinion concerning the Buddhist hypothesis: "Maurice Magre, that wonderful popularizer of Hindu wisdom, has devoted in his book *Magiciens et Illuminés* (*Magicians and Luminaries* [T.N.]) a number of chapters about the mystery of the Albigenses. His hypothesis, according to which the Cathars were, during the Middle Ages, Buddhists of the Occident, is shared by a number of people and has been adopted by some very reputable historians, such as Guiraud. . . ." But Rahn himself does not share this opinion.
20. First-century Jewish soldier and historian, who lived in Rome after the siege of Jerusalem by Titus (A.D. 70). His *Jewish Antiquities* is a major source of information concerning primitive Christianity [T.N.].
21. Arius was a fourth-century priest of Alexandria who held that



- Christ the Son was not consubstantial with God the Father [T.N.].
22. Lenau, *Les Albigeois*.
  23. As were the writings of the Manichaeans.
  24. The Cathars believed that the end of the world would be accompanied by cosmic catastrophes: The oceans would engulf the Earth, sweeping away all life; the sun would explode; the moon would be destroyed; and the stars would disappear, giving way to the reign of darkness. "The fire will consume the waters, and the waters will extinguish the fire." Thus the evil works will be extirpated. Everything transient is the work of the Evil One: That is why St. John called him the *Antichrist*. In Persia, Zoroaster and Mani said that the god of Darkness had given his law to Moses, the evil magician.
  25. In this connection, here is the "heretical" credo of James and Mecasmus, two dualists from Italy who had "confessed their errors to Holy Mother the Church" (related by Christine Thouzelier, *Catharisme et valdésisme en Languedoc*): "Devil, creator of matter: contempt for the cross, for houses of worship, and for the sacraments of the Roman Church, especially the worthlessness of the Eucharist. . . . No salvation for adults and innocent children who have died without receiving the Consolamentum, administered by the dualists who, by the laying on of their hands, confer the Holy Spirit. The Demon gave the law to Moses. . . . Worthlessness of pilgrimages; condemnation of marriage; prohibition of meats and eggs which come *de adulterio* ("from a carnal act" [T.N.]). Any *consolé* (person having received the Consolamentum [T.N.]) who would eat meat would be damned. "*The Devil caused the Deluge, in order to kill the Giants who were preaching to men who, because of their fornication, tollebant hereses Diaboli*" ("were creating heirs of the Devil" [T.N.]).
  26. Christine Thouzelier, *op. cit.*
  27. In *Atlantis*, No. 146 (March-April, 1950, pp. 99-100), we read: "In No. 88 of *Atlantis* on the Cathars, I pointed out that the principal sacrament of these Christian Johannites consisted in the laying on of hands on Good Friday, following the reading of the prologue of the Gospel of John. This sacrament was, therefore, the transmission of the gifts of the spirit spoken of in Acts 8:12." And Paul Le Cour added: "This strength can be imparted not only by means of the hands, but also by a glance and by the spoken word. It is then 'Spiritual Magnetism.' The ability to dominate and to fascinate comes from this. This was true of Hitler, whose gaze and whose speech stirred crowds but whose effectiveness ceased as soon as he appeared on a movie screen (an observation of mine during a trip to Germany in 1938)." And Le Cour brings together these lines: "And Jesus, immediately know-

- ing in himself the virtue that had gone out of him, . . ." (Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19, 8:46); "And he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4:40).
28. *Op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.
  29. Maurice Magre, *La clef des choses cachées* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1935), p. 152.
  30. Nicolaiism is the marriage of priests; simony is the buying or selling of sacred things for profit.
  31. Goethe, *Faust* (I, 509-510).
  32. For example, the noble lady Adélaïde who "reigned over her court of love at the castle of Puivert, in the magnificent forests of the Pyrenees. Adélaïde was in fact a deeply religious person. The god she prayed to, however, was not ours. Her Christ was not on the cross. The threatening god of Israel was, for her, Lucifer. Adélaïde was a heretic!" (Rahn, *op. cit.*).
  33. Fernand Niel, *Albigeois et cathares* (Paris: P.U.F., 1955), p. 67.
  34. Otto Rahn, *op. cit.*
  35. Richard Wagner, *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*.
  36. Otto Rahn, *op. cit.*, p. 190. (Romany, Romanie, the old Roman province (*Provincia romana*), comprising Provence, Languedoc, Dauphiné, Savoie [T.N.]).
  37. *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.
  38. The climb took place at night in December, 1243.

## CHAPTER 2. THE GRAIL: NEO-PAGAN RELIC

1. Otto Rahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-260 (see infra, "The Templars and the Rose Cross"). It has long been known that the provinces between the Garonne and Rhone—a hotbed of Cathar activity—were a principal recruiting ground of the Templars [T.N.].
2. In imitation, doubtless, of the garb of the Cathar "perfects" who wore it as a sign of their spiritual mourning.
3. We can only follow here the source offered by von Eschenbach, since the writings of the first narrator, Guyot de Provence, a Cathar troubadour, were burned by the Church.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 150.
5. It is in this part of the Pyrenees that we find the most vestiges of prehistory, which proves that the region has been inhabited for a very long time.
6. *Op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.
7. Hercules is the Ilhomber (god of the Sun) of the Iberians.
8. Solomon's jewel(-case); that is to say, the Grail.
9. It is also the number of a coven. In 1938, during the fraudulent trial of General von Fritsch on charges trumped up by the Gestapo, Himmler assembled twelve SS officers in a room adjoining



- the courtroom and, concentrating on the victim's guilt, endeavored to sway the court. See Richard Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (New York: Capricorn, 1967), p. 272 [T.N.].
10. According to Saint-Loup (*Nouveaux Cathares pour Montségur*), the prominent Nazi was someone other than Rosenberg, who was in Toulouse. If so, then who was he?
  11. 1244-1944. The greening once again of the laurel was to be the sign of the return of Knowledge among men, that is to say, the Grail. Compare Hitler's statement to his entourage: "Humanity moves one giant step upward every 700 years." (Hermann Rauschning, *Hitler m'a dit*, Paris: Coopération, 1939).
  12. The French Nazi militia, during the Occupation [T.N.].
  13. SD = Sicherheitsdienst (SS Security Service for Party intelligence and internal security); Abwehr (Intelligence and Clandestine Warfare Service of the German High Command). The RSHA = Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt (SS Department for Race and Resettlement) had the responsibility for organizing German colonization in the conquered eastern territories. See Heinz Höhne, *The Order of the Death's Head. The Story of Hitler's SS*, trans. Richard Barry (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970), Appendix 2 [T.N.].
  14. René Guénon gives the following explanation: "If the Grail is a vase (*grasale*) and a book (*graduale*), what we are talking about here is not a book as such but an inscription on the cup. . . . Now, some inscriptions equally "nonhuman" also appear in certain circumstances. . . . This one was, therefore, a speaking stone, . . . for if a stone can "speak" by emitting sounds (Guénon is thinking here about "oracular stones"), it can do it just as well by means of characters or of figures on its surface. . . ." ("Le voile d'Isis," in *Etudes traditionnelles*, August, 1946). And in an observation which further strengthens our hypothesis, Guénon adds in a footnote: ". . . is in obvious relation to the symbolism of the 'third eye,' therefore, also of the stone fallen from Lucifer's forehead where it so functioned. Moreover, it was also by his fall that man himself lost the 'third eye,' that is, the 'meaning of eternity,' which the Grail restores to him who succeeds in conquering it." (*Symboles fondamentaux de la science sacrée* [Paris: NRF, 1962], p. 293; note from the preceding article, which is chapter 44 of this work). (The "third eye," an occult organ of psychic vision, is often identified with the pineal gland, a body of unknown function found in the brain and believed to be a vestigial sense organ. Some occultists believe it to be the seat of the soul and the organ of higher memory which, when activated, permits the soul to perceive the meaning of human destiny [T.N.]).
  15. Published in French by Amiot-Dumont. The foregoing remarks on runology were drawn largely from issue No. 9 of *Nouvelle Ecole*, devoted to runes. (*Nouvelle Ecole*-B.P. 129-07/75-Paris 7).

16. During the same period (in 1896), the English writer M. P. Shiel published a short story entitled *The SS*. The stage was set, the curtain could now go up.

## CHAPTER 3. THE MYTH OF THE BEGINNINGS

1. This was the western extremity of the Hellenic world [T.N.].
2. Plato, *Timaeus*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI (New Jersey: Princeton, 1961), p. 1159 [T.N.].
3. Paris: Omnium littéraire, 1965.
4. Goddess of love and joy [T.N.].
5. In the biological and not in the moral sense [T.N.].
6. 1567 B.C. to the tenth century B.C. [T.N.].
7. Name given to the inhabitants of the region of the Upper Nile [T.N.].
8. Hamilton and Cairns, *op. cit.*, p. 1224 [T.N.].
9. The experiments for which this group of SS had volunteered during World War II (voluntary castration, plasticizing of the thoracic cavity, etc.) had the same purpose: the conquest of the marine world with a very definite purpose in mind. The adventure ended tragically for these SS athletes, as it would for the concentration camp inmates who were used as guinea pigs in identical experiments.
10. Geological studies seem to confirm the legend of this arctic paradise. Roger Vercel gives a fascinating description of what this region might have been like in the most remote of ages past: "At that time, giant trees with luxurious foliage stirred in the breezes of Greenland and Spitzbergen. Under a fiery sun, the thick vegetation of the tropics swelled with sap in places where today there are only lichens covering the ground. The bracken mixed with giant horsetail rushes, palm trees of the Tertiary Period, and the liana of the arctic jungle. The heat of summer blazed, the heavy-laden clouds poured warm rains on the region. And in the immensity of the polar forest lived animals of proportionate size: the hairy mammoth, the two-horned rhinoceros, the great deer whose antlers reached fifteen feet across, the cave lion." (Posthumous note to the Société française de philosophie, p. 26.) The coal of Spitzbergen and of Bear Island is the vestige of this luxurious vegetation. . . . "In those times, the North Pole lay doubtless near Paris or somewhere in Eastern Europe. . . . The earthly paradise extended to the extreme north of the Boreal Islands, in that zone so perfectly defended by the ice barriers that we have not yet been able to determine the exact limits of the land and of the water" (*A l'assaut des pôles*, Coll. Marabout, pp. 7-8).
11. The Iceland of the Vikings and the sagas was able to keep some



faint recollection of a flourishing civilization which had developed on its soil during a fabulous period. This would also explain the extraordinary development of the occult sciences and particularly of alchemy among Icelandic monks during the Middle Ages.

12. An extremely important discovery gives proof of the Aryan migrations toward Montségur and the West in general: We refer to the discovery of a sculpted hand, found at Morenci, near the château of Montségur itself. This hand is in steatite, having a golden glint and measuring about twenty centimeters. . . . Now, according to mineralogical classification, ivory-colored steatite with a golden glint is found only in the Caucasus. . . . It was in this region that Hitler's 1942 offensive took place, and this explains his fierce determination to conquer and to hold Stalingrad, the gateway to the Caucasus, the cradle of the Aryan race. . . . We know what happened to the Sixth Army of Paulus. There is likewise much that could be said concerning the symbolism of the hand: We refer to the Cathar laying-on-of-hands (see "Introduction," n. 20) on Good Friday and also to Hitler's famous gesticulations during his public addresses. (The belief that the "home of the Indo-Europeans" was located in southern Russia has received striking support from recent linguistic investigation, notes W. P. Lehmann, "Contemporary Linguistics and Indo-European Studies," *PMLA*, 87:5 [Oct. 1972], 992 [T.N.].)
13. This last claim, which we simply pass on, seems to contradict the theory of the Atlantan origins of the ancient Egyptians, even if it attributes to the white race the paternity of this civilization. It is not impossible however, that Egypt experienced different "invasions" by turns from the East and from the West, in a circular movement. In any case, it is not (in our opinion) the Aryan peoples from Persia who could have founded, at a relatively recent date, the ancient Pharaonic civilization which bespeaks a much older contribution.
14. We find an allusion to the reign of the giants in the prediction of Wala, at the beginning of the Icelandic *Edda*: "I recall the giants who were born with the dawning of days, those giants who once taught me wisdom." In the ancient legends, the giants are depicted as being a red race, that is, having red hair, since mention is made elsewhere of redheads. The gigantomachia gives the following description of the giants of the period before the Deluge: Atlantans, titans, cyclops, or men with brass-colored hair. It must be acknowledged that the notion of red has always been associated, throughout all of antiquity, with the Nordic and Celtic races, that is, the races of the North Atlantic. On the Tibetan frescoes showing the *four kings of the four directions of space*, the West is represented by a red figure holding in its hands a chorten, a sort of small funerary monument.

#### CHAPTER 4. THE GNOSIS, OR SUPREME KNOWLEDGE

1. First published in Paris in 1889; Engl. trans. with Introduction by Paul M. Allen (Blauvelt: Steiner Publications, 1961 [T.N.]).
2. The Turanians were excellent armorers, as well as skilled cavalrymen.
3. This ancient Gnostic sect still survives in Southern Mesopotamia [T.N.].
4. Manes set forth his doctrine and his thoughts in several works, namely the *Shanbuhragan* (dedicated to Sapor I of Persia, his protector), *The Living Gospel*, *The Treasure of Life*, the *Book of the Mysteries*, and the *Angelion* (or *Book of the Angel*). These manuscripts, consisting of sheets of papyrus, shone with the secret writing invented by Manes so that his doctrine would not fall into the hands of the uninitiated. The folios were richly decorated with flowers, fruits, and birds, for Manes was a great painter. The compliment "You paint like Manes" is still used in Persia. All of these books were burned or scattered. The cult and the hierarchy were painstakingly organized. We know little about them save that there existed a priesthood whose liturgical vestments were black, white, and red; symbolic colors which were taken up later by the inheritors of the Gnosis (including the Nazi Party [T.N.]).
5. "The whole conception of Manes' Christianity depends on the notion of a cosmic Christ and that is why Manes has been criticized for not considering the appearance and the death of Jesus Christ as historical facts" (Simone Hannedouche, *Manichéisme et catharisme* [Carcassonne: éd. des Cahiers d'études cathares, 1967], p. 33).
6. Theodore of Mopsuestia (fourth century A.D.) was a Greek theologian involved in the Nestorian and Pelagian controversies. His polemical writings were condemned by the Church in 553 [T.N.].
7. The sun-god of light and truth, of the middle zone, between heaven and hell, chief helper of Ahura-Mazda in his struggle with the powers of darkness. The cult called Mithraea was the most serious rival of early Christianity and was a prevailing religion among the Roman legionnaires at the time of Trajan (second century) who introduced it into Rome [T.N.].
8. The Manichaean communities were organized in the image of the cosmos: twelve archons, seven magistrates, four episcops, who taught the doctrine to the faithful.
9. Ginza de Gauche (III, 4).
10. Simone Hannedouche, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
11. *Ibid.*
12. The reader is referred to Zoroaster's dream (Cambyses: son of



- Cyrus the Great, and King of Persia, sixth century B.C. [T.N.].
13. The manuscripts of Pythagoras have not come down to us. The library of Alexandria had one, annotated by Plotinus and enclosed in a gold sheath, but the Christians put the torch to all of these treasures (destruction of the "Serapeum" in the fourth century, upon the order of the Emperor Theodosius I).
  14. Greek philosopher, born in Syria; allowed the Neoplatonist philosophy to degenerate into theurgy and demonology [T.N.].
  15. Thus, the Carpocratians belonging to the Alexandrian Gnosis saw in Jesus a being of flesh and blood, whose exceptional strength of soul triumphed over all evil. Carpocrates goes further; putting morality aside altogether, he tramples underfoot the Christian notion of good and evil. This attitude prefigures, by 5,000 years, the Nietzschean philosophy of the liberation of man.
  16. This did not stop Rosenberg, in *The Myth of the 20th Century*, from drawing on the Gnosis and claiming the Gnostic authors as the predecessors of the National Socialist ethic. It is true that Rosenberg, who was a bitter enemy of the Church, found in this philosophy a support for his neo-Pagan theories.
  17. Gnostic horror for corrupted flesh is found again in the troubadours of the thirteenth century, who were totally imbued with Cathar or neo-Gnostic spirituality. The goal will be to serve love. This is courtly love, a purely spiritual sentiment pledging the lover to chastity.
  18. Meister Eckhart was a fourteenth-century German mystic who taught a mystical pantheism and influenced later religious mysticism and speculative philosophy in places as far away as India, China, and Japan. The theme of all the medieval mystics is that men should seek the kingdom of God within themselves, as opposed to the "walled Church" (see F. Heer, *op. cit.*, p. 375 [T.N.]).
  19. Second century A.D. One of the most important of the Gnostics, he sought apostolic sanction for a philosophical system integrating Platonic transcendentalism, Christology, cosmogony, and illuminism [T.N.].
  20. Greek philosopher, fifth century B.C. His theory of the universe foresees a perfecting from the imperfect, and a periodic return of things to the elemental state [T.N.].
  21. (St.) Isidore, doctor of the Church, bishop of Seville (seventh century). Works include *Etymologies*, an encyclopedia, history of the Goths, Vandals, and Suevi, etc. [T.N.].
  22. Dehmel's (1863-1920) intellectual verse reflects the influence of Nietzsche. His exquisite poem "Weib und Welt" ("Woman and World") inspired the composer Arnold Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (*Transfigured Night*) [T.N.].
  23. In *The Myth of the 20th Century*, Rosenberg cannot find enough praise for the Rhenish mystic, and we can understand why.

24. That is, the sum of the Greek letters alpha, beta, rho, alpha, Xi, alpha, sigma, which amounts to 365. Of uncertain origin, this god was worshiped by the Gnostics and various Christian-Gnostic sects from the second century. The Egyptian Basilides regarded Abraxas as the Supreme Power, the source of Mind (*Nous*), the Word (*Logos*), and other emanations, including the 365 heavens of his system. He is often a form of the sun god [T.N.].
25. Julian "The Apostate," Roman emperor (fourth century A.D. [T.N.]).
26. St. Hildegard of Bingen, twelfth-century Benedictine abbess. Prophetess of decline, her apocalyptic visions foresaw the passing of five terror-filled epochs of world history, before the cosmos would expire in a blaze of light [T.N.].
27. H. Leisegang, *La Gnose* (Paris: Payot, 1951).
28. Georges Barbier, *Les Infiltrations maçonniques dans l'Eglise* (Paris: 1911), p. 99.

## CHAPTER 5. THE CENTERS OF INITIATION

1. The authors mean ultimate, absolute, integral knowledge, i.e. Gnosis [T.N.].
2. Gérard de Nerval—esoteric writer—tells us in his *Voyage en Orient* how he met a Prussian officer sent by his government to the expedition of the renowned Egyptologist Karl R. Lepsius (it is not just lately that the Germans have been interested in Egypt). This officer, very pleasant and very well-educated, explained to the writer *the mysteries of Egyptian initiation in the Great Pyramid*: "The German officer," wrote Nerval, "gave me a rather logical explanation of the purpose of such a monument. No one can hold a candle to the Germans, when it comes to the mysteries of antiquity. Here is, according to his version, what the lower gallery with its rails by means of which we had descended and come back up with so much difficulty, was used for. The person to be initiated had to climb into a cart. The cart started downward, due to the sharp incline of the road. Having arrived at the center of the pyramid, the initiate was received by some of the ordinary priests, who showed him the well and invited him to cast himself into it. The neophyte naturally hesitated, which was taken as a sign of prudence. Then he was brought a sort of helmet with a lighted lamp on top and, thus equipped, could with some care descend into the well, where he encountered here and there iron spikes sticking out, and on which he could put his feet to rest. The initiate kept on descending for a long while, barely able to see, even with the lamp. Then, about 100 feet down, he started up through the entrance of a gallery blocked by a grill, which immediately opened before him. Three men appeared from nowhere,



wearing bronze masks resembling the face of Anubis, the dog-god. You had to stand up to their threats and move on, by throwing them down. You went on about a league further, before arriving at a large space suggesting a thick, dark forest. The minute you started up the main walk, everything was immediately illuminated and gave the impression of everything being on fire. But it was only some fireworks and combustibles which had been placed in iron holders. The neophyte had to cross the forest, at the price of a few burns, and usually managed to do so. Beyond was a stream which he had to swim across. The candidate had barely reached the middle, when a tremendous turbulence of the waters, caused by two gigantic paddlewheels, stopped him and threw him back. Just as all of his strength seemed gone, he saw before him an iron ladder by which he could keep from drowning. This was the third trial. As the initiate placed a foot on each rung, the one he had just left behind broke off and fell into the river. This situation was made even more dangerous by a terrible wind which shook both the ladder and the candidate. By now almost drained of his strength, he would have enough presence of mind to take hold of two rings descending toward him and by which he would hang on, until a door opened, which he reached only with greatest difficulty. This was the end of the four elementary trials. The initiate then came into a temple, turned past the statue of Isis, and saw himself greeted and congratulated by the priests."

We shall see that all the sects, including F. M. M., will use the ritual of the initiatory trials which are both symbol and truth. Likewise, among the SS, to become an officer, there were secret ordeals which we are not familiar with, but which as likely as not, had to do with the cult of sun worship and the mystical revelation of racist knowledge.

3. Compare with the works of the contemporary French poet and dramatist Jean Cocteau (especially his *Orpheus*).
4. He was believed to have met the Magi at Babylon, en route to India, via Asia Minor [T.N.].
5. *La Clef des choses cachées* (*The Key to Things Concealed*) (Paris: Fasquelle, 1935), pp. 13-14.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
8. St. Sernin, or St. Saturnin, first Bishop of Toulouse, martyred ca. 250. In alchemy, Saturn is the metal lead, one of the baser metals which the alchemists sought to transmute into gold [T.N.].
9. The Borely Museum in Marseilles has an exhibit unique in all of France: the Gallic sanctuary of Roquepertuse. This site, uncovered by M. de Gérin Ricard in 1920, has two statues, six and one-half feet tall, and representing, beyond a doubt, deified heroes. The one on the left has on its shoulder the swastika or gamma

- cross, proof that the Druids were familiar with this sacred emblem.
10. "An occult term said to be a cosmic picture gallery and record of every thought, feeling and action since the world began. Often advanced as an explanation of clairvoyant and psychometric perceptions. Somewhat akin to the idea of Cosmic Consciousness. Yogis believe that this record can be contacted when in certain psychic states of consciousness" (*The Steinerbooks Dictionary of the Psychic, Mystic, Occult* [Blauvelt, New York: Rudolf Steiner Publ., 1973], pp. 14-15 [T.N.]).
11. Paris: Albin Michel, 1957.
12. Paris: Gallimard, 1958.
13. The legend doubtless points to the Caucasus or Hyperborea.
14. Fernand Ossendowski, *Bêtes*, . . . (Paris: Plon, 1924), p. 288.
15. Jean-Marquès Rivière, *A l'ombre des monastères tibétains* (Paris: Attinger, 1956), p. 198.
16. And subsequently in Catharism.
17. In Greek mythology Ariadne gave Theseus the thread whereby he escaped from the labyrinth [T.N.].
18. Elsewhere, for convenience, we shall use the term Rosicrucian, Rosicrucianism, etc. [T.N.].
19. Of the eight major Crusades, 1095-1270 (there were countless smaller expeditions), only the first had any real success. The Crusader states of the Levant were to last only about 100 years [T.N.].
20. Or Knights of the Temple, a religio-military order founded in 1118 to protect the holy places in Palestine from the Moslems [T.N.].
21. *L'Ordre des Templiers* (Paris: La Colombe, 1961).
22. The Roman emperor Valentinian III (fifth century A.D.) [T.N.].
23. The ruins of ancient Thebes [T.N.].
24. Walter Map, or Mapes, Welsh churchman (1137-1209), author of the *De Nugis Curialium* (*Courtly Recreations*), a gossipy collection of anecdotes concerning court life [T.N.].
25. Tripolitania in Syria, and not in Libya.
26. Grand Master of the Templars, and provincial of Auvergne.
27. Franconia was to become the citadel of Nazism.
28. We are talking about the true Rosicrucian movement and not the present-day Rose-Cross which turns out initiates in twelve easy lessons and has its headquarters in the U.S.
29. The Count of St. Germain, an authentic Rosicrucian, lived during the period preceding and following the Revolution.
30. *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum* translates "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," Latin inscription placed over Christ on the Cross by the Romans (John 19:19) [T.N.].
31. *Le Livre de l'Ange* (*The Book of the Angel*) (Paris: Julliard, 1969).



32. The "Count" Alessandro di Cagliostro, whose real name was Giuseppe Balsamo (1743-1795), physician, alchemist, necromancer, became famous and rich through his "elixir of immortal youth." He founded lodges of Egyptian freemasons throughout Europe and was eventually imprisoned for this for life, by the Inquisition at Rome (1789). [T.N.].
33. Jean Sylvain Bailly (1736-93), French astronomer, author of the monumental *Histoire de l'astronomie* [T.N.].
34. This fact is confirmed once again by the close ties between the English "Golden Dawn" and the German Vril Society from 1920 to 1930.
35. Michel de Nôtre-Dame, sixteenth-century Provençal astrologer, famous for his *Centuries* (1503-1506), containing his predictions [T.N.].
36. Jean Touchard, *Histoire des idées politiques* (Paris: 1967), p. 110.
37. Eric Muraise, *Saint-Rémy-de-Provence et les secrets de Nostradamus* (Paris: Julliard, 1969), p. 106.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
39. Emperor from 1152 to 1190.
40. A mystical development within Islam, mostly of Persian influence [T.N.].

## CHAPTER 6. NIETZSCHE AND SUPERMAN

1. We shall come back later to his "illumination" at Linz where as a young man he first heard Wagner's opera *Rienzi*—an illumination witnessed by his boyhood friend Kubizek.
2. "The memorial services (Heroes Memorial Day) at the opera this noon were conducted in a Wagnerian setting (Wagner's influence on Nazism, on Hitler, has never been grasped abroad) . . ." (entry for March 8, 1936, in W. L. Shirer's *Berlin Diary* [New York: Popular Library, 1941]), p. 46 [T.N.].
3. *Die Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1899. The son of a British admiral, Chamberlain was an anglophobe. He became a German citizen in 1916 [T.N.].
4. *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1930 [T.N.].
5. *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, 1872 [T.N.].
6. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 1886 [T.N.].
7. Alphonse de Chateaubriant, *op. cit.*
8. In addition to the planned "extermination of the Polish and Ukrainian people, of 170 million Russians (as mentioned in one plan), the intelligentsia of Western Europe such as the Dutch and the people of Alsace and Lorraine," the Nazis aimed at "a 'progressive selection' and extermination of undesirable parts among the German population which in those very years (1941-42) was

being planned for the future." (Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [New York: Meridian, 1971], pp. 411, 412 n. 68).

9. *Also sprach Zarathustra*, 1883-1884 [T.N.].
10. *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882 [T.N.].
11. (Paris: P.U.F., 1954), p. 61.
12. *Libres Propos sur la Guerre et la Paix*, coll. by Martin Bormann (Paris: Flammarion, 1952), II, 345.

## CHAPTER 7. WAGNER THE TROUBADOUR

1. A fairy of German legend.
2. It was here that Luther translated the New Testament in 1521-1522 [T.N.].
3. The fabulous Montsalvat is none other than the castle of Montségur.
4. Henry I, "The Fowler," was the favorite hero of Himmler, head of the SS.
5. Concerning this symbolism, Wagner uses it in much the same way as Leonardo da Vinci would seem to do: The idea is always hidden behind the symbol which will transmit it intact to future generations. Wagner, through the universal language of music, caught the immortal inspiration of the swan of Leda. He is the inspired continuator of light.
6. Edouard Schuré, *Richard Wagner* (Paris: L.A.P., 1895).
7. In his work *L'Esotérisme de quelques symboles chrétiens*, Louis Charbonneau-Lassay wrote: "What is, then, the meaning, hermetically speaking, of this union of the rose and of the oriental swastika? . . . The swastika and the rose are two very old emblems of the leaving of life, and of the entrance into it, of men and animals in the world." And he reproduces the famous graffiti where rose and swastika are joined together:



8. *Tage Lieder*, lyrical poems in which the lovers having spent the night together, are called to separate by the cry of the watchman heralding the dawn [T.N.].
9. The warning cry of Brangaene, in Act II of Wagner's *Tristan* [T.N.].
10. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries are rich in *lapidaries*, compilations of precious stones having miraculous or symbolical prop-



- erties (see U. T. Holmes, Jr., *A History of Old French Literature from the Origins to 1300* [New York: Crofts, 1938], pp. 60-62) [T.N.].
11. Or: gammadion; fylfot; swastika [T.N.].
  12. The Templars were well acquainted with the gamma cross. The cross that the Grand Masters "quartered" in their heraldic devices was a pattee cross changed into an Armenian cross, derived from the Celtic cross and from the gamma cross. The ends of this pattee cross were determined by circular arcs.
  13. Colas di Rienzi (1313-1354), Italian patriot, friend of Petrarch, leader of an insurrection against the rule of the nobles. Crowned tribune of Rome and invested with dictatorial powers, he denounced the temporal power of Pope Clement VI [T.N.]. Rienzi gave himself the title of "Spiritus Sancti Miles Orbi Terrarum Amator" ("Soldier of the Holy Spirit Who Loves the World" [T.N.]). He was excommunicated as a Manichaeon by the cardinal de Ceccano.
  14. August Kubizek, *Adolf Hitler, mon ami d'enfance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), pp. 123-129. (Trans. E. V. Anderson, with Introduction by H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Young Hitler I Knew* [New York: Tower, n.d.] [T.N.]).
  15. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
  16. *Doctrines du nationalisme* (Paris: Librairie française, 1958), p. 177.
  17. *Ibid.*
  18. *Tischgespräche*, trans. N. Cameron and R. H. Stevens, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-44*, New York, 1953 [T.N.]. Quotation here from *Libres paroles*.
  19. *Les Dictateurs*, Paris: Denoël, 1935.
  20. Adolf Hitler, speech of December 10, 1940.
  21. Sometimes called an "anti-Nazi Nazi," Rauschnig fled to Poland, thence to England and to the United States (1941). His first book on Hitler, *Hitler m'a dit* (Paris: Coopération, 1939), was translated and published in England in 1939, and in the United States the following year (see Bibliography) [T.N.].
  22. *Op. cit.*, p. 256.
  23. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.
  24. *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

#### CHAPTER 8. THE SECRET ORIGINS OF NAZISM

1. *Op. cit.*, pp. 267-268. Rauschnig was former Nazi president of the Danzig Senate.
2. We have already spoken of the Cathar symbol: the dove (symbol of the Holy Spirit). Otto Rahn discovered many paintings of this type in the grottoes of Ornlac.

3. Rauschnig, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
4. Not to be confused with the present Theosophical Society whose headquarters are in Adyar.
5. The first theosophical lodges in Germany were founded by an Austrian, Rudolf Steiner, who was also the founder of Anthroposophy\* (1912) (\* "Man's knowledge" or spiritual science [T.N.]).
6. On this question, the reader can still consult profitably Loiseleur-Deslongchamps' book *Les Lois de Manou* (Paris: Garnier, 1903). Madame Blavatsky's theories on the Creation, as given in the aforementioned reference, are practically identical to those of the Nazi scientist Hörbiger.
7. *Old Diary Leaves, the True Story of the Theosophical Society* (New York: Putnam's, 1895) [T.N.].
8. Paris: Grasset, 1969.
9. Address of the Gnostic patriarch Synesius at the Spiritual Congress of 1908. The reader will have noted the dual character—masculine and feminine—of the divinity, which bears comparison with the androgynous (hermaphroditic) statues of the Templars, and with the Cathar dove.
10. *Die Weisse Rose*. The revolt started in Hitler's favorite city, Munich, at the University of Munich, with students disillusioned after ten years of Nazi rule and the German defeat at Stalingrad in 1943 [T.N.].
11. Who would commit suicide (March 14, 1946) upon learning not of the tragic death of his son, it appears, but rather, the total destruction of his creation: Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich. This suicide is revealing, for it was carried out according to the rite of Japanese bushido. Karl Haushofer committed hara-kiri, after having killed his wife, as did Goebbels.
12. On the Vril, see the extraordinary work of E. G. Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race* (1871). This British author was assuredly a Rosicrucian.
13. The Vril had some weird dealings with certain Tibetan Tantra sects. When a small colony of Himalayans took up residence in Berlin in 1925, one of its more prominent members was a strange, Tibetan monk referred to as "the man with green gloves" by allusion to his affiliation with the Verdant Society, which had its origins in Tibet. He had on three different occasions revealed to the press the exact number of Nazi votes in the Reichstag. It has even been said that he often entertained Hitler, claiming to be the "keeper of the keys to the Kingdom of Asgard."
14. This explains many things, particularly the determinedly pro-Arab policies of Hitler but which have generally been thought to have reflected some sort of opportunism. It is true that Hitler gave asylum to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 1941 and that in 1945-1946 a number of Nazi leaders found refuge in Egypt, Is-



lamic country of the sect of the Moslem Brotherhood. It was not at all difficult for these high Nazi dignitaries to convert to Islam as did, for example, Omar Amin, alias Johannes von Leers, since secretly, they were already won over. (The Nazi racial experts concocted an acceptable Aryan "genealogy" for the Semite, Haj Amin al Husseini, and gave him the rank of Major SS. An extensive documentation on the continuing presence of Nazi war criminals in Egypt and Syria, in Kurt P. Tauber, *op. cit.*, II, 1106-1116, and in Zwy Aldouby and Jerrold Ballinger, *The Shattered Silence. The Eli Cohen Affair* [New York: Lancer, 1971], chap. 15: "Crescent and Swastika," pp. 273-289 [T.N.]).

15. That is to say, the hammer of Thor (Germanic myth) and which is otherwise symbolized by the swastika.
16. Paris: France-Empire, 1962.
17. *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 206.
18. See William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. A History of Nazi Germany* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett, 1960), pp. 60-64.

#### CHAPTER 9. THE HITLERIAN COSMOGONY

1. Hermann Rauschning, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.
2. *La Gerbe des forces* (Paris: Grasset, 1937), pp. 287-288. A Teutonic Knight was seen at the Cathar Congress of Lavelanet in 1954 (Yes, 1954!).
3. Toulouse: Bible d'Or, 1968.
4. An idea first put forth by Rudolf Olden in 1936 in his book *Hitler, the Pawn* (London: V. Gollancz, Ltd.) [T.N.].
5. Words of Hitler, as reported by Rauschning, *op. cit.*
6. Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, *op. cit.*
7. The reader is referred to the works of Teilhard de Chardin, this Gnostic who dares not admit it.
8. In the cycle of Aryan legends, Asgard is the mythical land of the superior white race, the Hyperboreans, ancestors of the present Indo-Europeans. This legend was known to Renan and figures in the anti-religious current of the nineteenth century. The Germanophilia of Renan makes it impossible for him not to accept this myth.
9. *Dialogues philosophiques*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1876.
10. Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, *op. cit.*, p. 363.
11. *Welteislehre*, or *Wel*: the doctrine of eternal ice [T.N.].
12. *Libres propos*, I, 242.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
14. According to Hörbiger, the history of our solar system is as follows: In the beginning, there was in the heavens an enormous

Sun, one hundred times brighter and larger than ours. This bright star collided with a giant planet made of cosmic ice. This mass penetrated deeply into the Sun and provoked a delayed-action explosion which threw back into space several fragments of different sizes. These formed the planets which we know: the Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, etc., all of which are cold and without life, while the Earth alone experiences the struggle between ice and fire, death and life. In a work dedicated to the glory of Hörbiger, Elmar Brugg wrote in 1952 the following: "None of the theories attempting to explain the universe, took into account the principle of contradiction, of struggle between two opposing forces, with which however the human soul has been nourished for thousands of years. The everlasting merit of Hörbiger is to have resuscitated the intuitive knowledge of our ancestors through the eternal conflict of fire and ice, sung in the *Edda*. He revealed this conflict for his contemporaries. He scientifically founded this grandiose image of the world ultimately tied to the dualism of matter and of force, of repulsion which disperses and of attraction, which brings together."

15. *Libres propos*, I, 313-314.
16. *Ibid.*, II, 84.
17. *Op. cit.*, pp. 132, 274.
18. Erich Hanussen, the "Jewish seer," whose seances were frequented by numerous prominent Nazis. See René Alleau, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209 [T.N.].
19. *The Operative Practice of Old Turkish Freemasonry. The key to the understanding of alchemy. An exposé of the ritual, doctrine and signs of recognition of Freemasonry of the Eastern Rite* (Leipzig, 1924), p. 7.
20. *Les Derniers Jours de Hitler* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1964), pp. 125-126.
21. Paris: Scorpion, 1961.
22. *The Pursuit of the Millennium. Revolutionary Messianism in Medieval and Reformation Europe and Its Bearing on Modern Totalitarian Movements*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper, 1961), p. 319.

#### CHAPTER 10. THE MYTH REALIZED

1. In the courtly romance *Ipomedon* (late twelfth century), its author, the Englishman Hugh of Rotelande, has his hero appear at the "Three Days' Tournament" attired successively in suits of red, black, and white armor [T.N.].
2. Notably around the Pog (Peak) of Montségur, which is rather disconcerting.
3. *La Clef des choses cachées*, p. 28.
4. Emphasis is mine [T.N.].



5. The cross would thus be the first symbol of mankind, the emblem of the first civilization on earth which chose it because of its solar meaning, this first empire being that of the "Sons of the Sun." (One of the favorite songs of the Nazis, the *Song of the Goths*, begins: "Up the Viking banner, up the blue sun-flag." See Peter Viereck, *Meta-Politics. The Roots of the Nazi Mind*, rev. ed. [New York: Capricorn, 1961], p. 287 [T.N.].)
6. "In occultism (clockwise) human view; (counterclockwise) divine view. . . . In Germany, with arms to the left and called *Hakenkreuz* (hook cross), instrument of anti-Semitism, brutality, greed, mass murder, torture." (Gertrude Jobs, *Dictionary of Folklore and Symbols* [New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1962], II, 1517 [T.N.].)
7. In Scandinavian mythology, Thor is the god of thunder [T.N.].
8. *La Grande Triade* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), pp. 46-47.
9. Journal, *The Speculative Mason*. In this article, the swastika is called the gammadion.
10. We have already called attention to the spiritual character of the word "Reich" which translated literally into French is "empire."
11. Hitler would say, when he wanted to whip up the enthusiasm of the crowds: "All of me is in you, you are all in me." This is the supreme identity, the eternal avatar of the Hindus. In India, it is taught that our eternal cycle has already seen 10 avatars (incarnation of a god; [T.N.]) of Vishnou; when the essential forms of knowing have become obscured, an avatar comes to adapt the eternal revelation to the new conditions of the world.
12. In Scandinavian mythology, the abode of heroes slain in battle [T.N.].
13. We find this messianic vocation of the *Volk* in the *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807-1808) of Fichte (and which predate Hitlerism by more than a century). We read: "The German Volk is the race chosen among all the races, for the education of the human species."
14. This is the theme of *The Deputy*, by the contemporary German playwright, Rolf Hochhuth. The most recent assessment of Pope Pius XII's role in World War II concerning the Holocaust, in *Newsweek* (April 16, 1973), p. 69 [T.N.].
15. In German, *der Schwarze* is the Devil [T.N.].
16. The "political commissars" under Stalin also answer this need. As a former seminarian, Stalin had understood its importance.
17. Magnificent twelfth-century fortress in Syria, constructed and defended by the order of fighting-monks known as the Hospitallers [T.N.].
18. In 1945, the different divisions of the SS numbered 600,000 men, including 300,000 foreigners, Europeans for the greater part, compared with 250,000 men in 1939. Let us note that in 1953, in

- Hanover, Chancellor Adenauer stated publicly: "The SS are soldiers like any others." Since 1956, they were accepted with their former rank (except Generals) in the Bundeswehr.
19. These SS specialists were the direct rivals of German Intelligence, the famous Abwehr of Admiral Canaris.
  20. Related by Hermann Rauschning in *Hitler m'a dit*.
  21. Alphonse de Chateaubriant, *op. cit.*
  22. It is strange that this gypsy legend brings a proof *a contrario*, proving just the opposite. This is remarkable, today when the gypsies are beginning to settle down and to give up their customs little by little, but still refuse to go to the United States (a "land which has been damned," having already known planetary catastrophes in the "distant past" of the human species).
  23. "Ancestral heritage" organization created by Himmler to further the search for German relics and to encourage research on early German history [T.N.].
  24. City on the Elbe, renowned for its fine porcelain [T.N.].
  25. Such hymns of praise were rarely lost on the Nazis. The same year that Chateaubriant's book appeared in France, it was published in Germany, under the title: *Geballte Kraft; ein französischer Dichter erlebt das neue Deutschland* (*Harvest of Strength; A French Poet Makes Acquaintance with the New Germany*), Karlsruhe: G. Braun, 1938 [T.N.].
  26. *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten*, Munich, 1920; *Unmoral in Talmud*, Munich, n.d.; *Verbrechen der Freimaurerei*, Munich, n.d.
  27. See Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide. The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper, 1969) [T.N.].
  28. K. Rudiger, *Das Werk Alfred Rosenberg: eine Bibliographie*, Munich, 1941. Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1930.
  29. Hitler said of Christ: "All comparison between Jesus and me is impossible, since the Nazarene was a Jew." (see Ray Petitfrère, *op. cit.*, p. 78). An early Nazi song goes: "Wir wollen nicht mehr Christen sein, weil Jesus war ein Judenschwein" ("We don't want to be Christians anymore, since Jesus was a Jew-pig"). This tactic having failed, the Nazis undertook to "aryanize" Christ (see Peter Viereck, *op. cit.*, "Christ Aryanized," pp. 282-287), a task gleefully pursued by Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda [T.N.].
  30. An area in southwest France, comprising the former county of Foix, and parts of the provinces of Gascony and Languedoc [T.N.].
  31. Alaric I, king of the Visigoths, and an Arian (follower of the heretic Arius) Christian [T.N.].
  32. *Le Trésor des Albigeois* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1938), p. 9.
  33. Allusion to Zoroaster and to the doctrine of Manes.



34. The Council of Nicaea (385) condemned the Gnostics and the esoteric tendency of Christianity.
35. Early fourteenth-century German mystic who believed that man's soul, retaining some illumination of the divine intelligence, experienced actual divinity through the union of his intellect with that of God. A mediocre scholar, Rosenberg could not know that Eckhart was deeply influenced by the great philosopher of the "Jewish Enlightenment," Maimonides (see F. Heer, *op. cit.*, p. 267) [T.N.].
36. *Les Maîtres du IIIe Reich* (Paris: Grasset, 1965).
37. Rosenberg's speech of November 28, 1940, as reported in the newspaper *L'Oeuvre*.
38. Captain Ernst Röhm, leader of the SA. His notorious homosexuality (as that of some of his followers) provided Hitler with a pretext for ridding himself of a dangerous adversary who had declared: "What that ridiculous Corporal says means nothing to us. . . . Hitler is a traitor. . . . If we can't get there with him, we'll get there without him" (Heinz Höhne, *op. cit.*, p. 96 [T.N.]).
39. "The Jews will pay for this," Hitler wrote in a letter full of insults addressed to the president of the jury of the Academy of Fine Arts, following his failure in Vienna, when he learned that of the seven members judging the competition, four were Israelites. This is the first indication of his anti-Semitism, according to numerous specialists.
40. We find an unusual reference to Caucasus Hyperborea (a singular combination!) made by Leonardo da Vinci: "The whiteness of Mount Taurus' summit shines in the darkness and its shadow reaches even to the mountains of Hyperborea." (*Codex Atlanticus*).
41. *Deutsche-Bergwerks Zeitung* of March 8, 1942. This political philosophy derives directly from the geopolitics peculiar to Hitler's master, Karl Haushofer.
42. This fact came to light only in 1965, in the course of an interview on Radio Stockholm with the former Swedish ambassador to London, Bjoern Prytz.
43. Asgard, Asgarth, Asgardhr: in Scandinavian mythology, the heavenly abode of the gods, connected with the earth by a rainbow bridge (Bifrost) [T.N.].

## CHAPTER 11. CATHARISM AND HITLERISM

1. This is the view of Hitler's Minister for Armament and War Production, Albert Speer: *Inside the Third Reich*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Macmillan, 1970) [T.N.].
2. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940 [T.N.].
3. *Douze ans auprès d'Hitler; confidences d'une secrétaire particulière d'Hitler recueillies par Albert Zoller*, Paris: Julliard, 1949;

- transl. of *Hitler privat* (*The Private Hitler*), Düsseldorf, 1949 [T.N.].
4. In Jewish legend, a figure constructed in the likeness of a human being, and endowed with life, by human agency [T.N.].
5. *Hitler m'a dit*, pp. 284-285.
6. This particular inversion of human values was illustrated at the massacre of the inhabitants of the French village of Oradour-sur-Glane, near Limoges (June 10, 1944). Of the population of 652 persons, only 10 survived. The livestock however, was spared by the SS, who carefully herded the animals into the fenced enclosures [T.N.].
7. Albert Zoller, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
8. Léon Degrelle, *Hitler pour mille ans* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1969). (Degrelle is the former Rexist leader in Belgium and was a General in the Combat SS [Waffen SS]. A very different view of Hitler's (unusual) sexual proclivities in Walter Langer's study prepared for the OSS (American Office of Strategic Services) during World War II and which has been published under the title: *The Mind of Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1972 [T.N.]).
9. Hitler also believed, as did the Cathars, in metempsychosis, the reincarnation of souls in lives yet to come: "Even he who takes his own life, inevitably returns to nature—body, soul, mind" (*Libres propos*, p. 139).
10. *Hitler m'a dit*, pp. 285-286.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
12. That is, the Church, which had burned the heretics [T.N.].
13. Almost all of the first Christians (including the Apostles) were Jews [T.N.].
14. Hitler, *Libres propos*, pp. 346-347.
15. See T. Ravenscroft, *op. cit.* [T.N.].
16. "It is certain that by nature I belong to an entirely different species. I would like to see nobody suffer, and to hurt no one. But when I see that the species is in danger, then, with me, the coldest reason replaces feeling."
17. Nikolaus Lenau, *Poèmes*, Edition Bilingue, ed. J. P. Hammer, transl. from the German by A. Spaeth, Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1969.
18. Maurice Magre, *Le trésor des Albigeois* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1938), p. 244.
19. Maurice Magre believed that Catharism was a western Buddhism. A study remains to be made however, of the links which existed, before and during World War II, between the Nazi esoteric groups and those of other European countries. (According to Pauwels and Bergier, *op. cit.*, tr. Rollo Myers [New York: Avon, 1968], p. 283, when the Russians entered Berlin, May 1945, they



found the corpses of a thousand men of Himalayan origin, in German uniform, but carrying no papers nor identification [T.N..].)

#### CHAPTER 12. APOCALYPSE: THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

1. Catherine Emmerich, in the course of her visions, "revealed" an initiation of Jesus in Tibet. This interpretation takes into account the gap in Jesus' life between the ages of eighteen and thirty. It proves, in any event, a convergence of esotericism toward the region of the Himalayas, which the Nazi scientists explored during their expeditions.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 41.
3. Ernst Wiechert prophesied, in 1924, in *The Wolf of Death* (*Der Totenwolf; roman*), where he vituperates against the Socialists and the morally corrupt for the revolution: "The twilight of the gods is going to strike you down, in order that German soil be freed from your vile breath."
4. Romain Rolland was an adept of Indian Buddhism.
5. German code name for the Bavarian Alpine redoubt to which the Nazi armies had originally intended to retreat, for a last-ditch stand.
6. At the time these lines were written, we were unaware of the tenor of the interview given by the author Saint-Loup to the new journal *Planète* (August, 1969). The author of *Nouveaux Cathares pour Montségur* "saw" the flight-plan of this mysterious, four-engine aircraft: It was going to the *Orient*. On this subject, we might recall the legend related by the old shepherd to Otto Rahn in 1931: "All the Cathars perished by fire, except Esclarmonde de Foix. When she knew the Grail to be safely hidden, she climbed to the top of Mount Tabor, changed into a white dove, and flew off toward the mountains of Asia. . . ." Seven centuries later, we saw the same strange myth surface once more.

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